

THE BAPTIST

CHURCH

OF AMERICA



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from

Your loving aunt -

Frances M. Ballard -

Davenport, Dec. 12th, 1904 -

MY BAPTISM,

AND WHAT LED TO IT.



MY BAPTISM,

AND

What Led to It.

BY THE

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IN
AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE
OF MY DEAR FRIEND
CHARLES ALBERT MINER, Esq.

(FORMERLY OF PHILADELPHIA, U.S.A.),

THROUGH WHOSE INSTRUMENTALITY I HAVE
LEARNT MANY OF THE TRUTHS AND
LESSONS COMMENDED IN THIS
BOOK :

WHOSE PATIENCE IN SUFFERING. AND
WHOSE DEVOTED
ALLEGIANCE TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,
WILL BE TO ME
A LIFE-LONG INSPIRATION.

THE AUTHOR.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

IN the following pages I have endeavoured to delineate the process of thought by which I was led to abandon infant-baptism, and to accept what I believe to be scriptural baptism, namely, believers'-immersion.

With much deference, I beg to ask of my Christian brethren of all denominations their dispassionate and candid consideration of the statements and arguments herein unfolded.

I trust that no uncharitable word has escaped my pen ; for in all theological controversy it is pre-eminently desirable that Christian people should give each other credit for sincerity, and ever speak what they believe to be the truth in the spirit of brotherly love.

The subject of infant-baptism is one of increasing importance at the present time, owing to the general advance of the system of sacerdotalism, and to the part which, in the estimation of Romanists and Ritualists, infant-baptism occupies in that system.

The Romanist and Ritualist boldly affirm that the Church has power to alter apostolic customs. But, on the other

hand, it is part of the essential principles of Protestantism that Christ is supreme in His Church, that the Bible is the Rule of Faith which He has given for the guidance of His followers, and that its teachings are to be explicitly obeyed.

I rejoice to say that amongst the Protestant Free Churches there has never been any sacerdotal belief in reference to infant-baptism, and that now that rite is generally regarded by them as a dedication service only.

Seeing that there are admittedly so many evils connected with the ministration of infant-baptism amongst Romanists and Ritualists, has not the time come for the Protestant Free Churchmen throughout the world to discontinue the baptismal formula in the case of infants, and to dedicate them to the Lord by some such service as is included in this treatise? And would it not be for the advancement of spiritual religion, if baptism were placed in its scriptural position as an expression of the believer's personal repentance and faith, and of his symbolical burial with Christ and resurrection to newness of life?

In the light of the conclusions arrived at by Dean Stanley and others, infant-baptism, as a matter of scriptural and historical controversy, is now practically dead. The concessions of Infant-Baptists which are given in this book might be multiplied to an indefinite extent. It is,

however, due to those whose testimonies are herein recorded, to state that in spite of their frank and candid admissions, they have all, more or less, defended or excused infant-baptism on some ground or other.

I am indebted to many friends for valuable suggestions during the writing of this treatise, amongst whom I ought to mention the Rev. Principal Edwards, D.D., the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., the Rev. J. E. Roberts, M.A., B.D., the Rev. J. Bowker, M.A., the Rev. D. Leonard Jones, M.A., the Rev. Frank White, the Rev. Eric Lewis, B.A., the Rev. F. W. Gusterson, A.T.S., Mr. James W. Thirtle, and Mr. Oliver Knott. To Mr. Gusterson I owe the admirable Indices. To Mr. Thirtle, the able author of the recent work on "The Titles of the Psalms," I am under very special obligations, not only for many valuable items of information, but also for the reading and revision of the proof-sheets.

It is my earnest hope that this treatise, written amid the many engagements of an active ministerial life, may be used by Him who alone baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, to the spread of His Truth and the honour of His Name.

J. MOUNTAIN.

ST. JOHN'S MANSE,
TUNBRIDGE WELLS,
KENT.



PREFACE.

IT GIVES me real pleasure to introduce the following pages, written by my friend, the Rev. J. Mountain, to the Christian Public. It was not by an easy path that he reached his present standpoint. The gold of his convictions was severely tested by the fires of trial. It seemed as though that solemn service at Christ Church, which preceded his immersion, would involve the loss of ministerial reputation, and of almost everything that man holds dear.

But God helped him to be true. He thought out the subject of believers'-baptism, disentangling himself from the prejudices and practices of a lifetime, as he considered the testimony of Scripture; and he resolutely set his face as a flint, hazarding the loss of all things that he might obey the command of his Lord. He is, therefore, well qualified to speak; and his words are rendered more weighty by the transparency of his motives, and the consistency of his life.

It is easy to see why our Lord gave believers'-baptism so prominent a position in His last commands, and in the Epistles of the New Testament. It is contrary to human

pride to yield compliance to a rite involving some amount of inconvenience, and exacting so literal an obedience to the will of Another. But those who are willing to obey one of His least commands, and to teach men so, must surely win, as our friend has won, a smile of gracious recognition from his Master.

It is clear also that the fact of having been for years a well-known worker for Christ, does not exonerate any from obeying His commands when once they are revealed. The demand for such obedience is often Christ's test to the reality of our consecration, and the portal to a wider sphere of usefulness.

My friend, the author of this book, has produced a treatise which, more concisely and fully than any that I know of, presents the case for believers'-baptism. His statements and arguments are based on a careful exegesis of Scripture; are advanced with Christian charity, and without a word of unkind reflection on those who differ from him; and are supported by a wide citation of corroborative testimony, which adds greatly to the value of the book.

It is an additional charm that the positions taken up in this work, have cost the writer so dearly; and I can only hope that the sale may be extensive enough to

PREFACE.

enable him, before he is called home, to remove the heavy debt remaining on the church-buildings which, by his instrumentality, have been erected to enable him to carry out his conscientious views.

There is no sectarian element in these pages. They may be read, and I hope will be read, by members of every branch of the One Church of Christ; and it is not too much to believe that large numbers will, in consequence, be led to follow the footprints of the Master into the likeness of His grave—being “buried with Him through baptism into death.”—Rom. vi. 4. The incentives to Sanctification would be greatly strengthened, if only we could remind all believers of the death which they had professed to die, and of the new life to which they had devoted themselves, by this act of identification with their Lord.

With cordial sympathy with my friend, and with admiration of this admirable treatise, I commend it to the Christian Public.

F. B. MEYER

Christ Church,
Westminster Bridge Road,
London, S.E.



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My Baptism: and What Led to it.

CHAPTER I.

WHY I HAVE WRITTEN THIS BOOK.

My Change of Belief. ON January 3rd, 1893, having become convinced, after careful investigation, that believers'-immersion is the only ordinance of baptism taught within the New Testament; I forwarded to the trustees of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion my resignation of the pastorate of Emmanuel Church—one of the most influential of the Free Churches in Tunbridge Wells—and on the following day I was publicly baptized at Christ Church, Westminster, by my friend the Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A.

Appeal to the Court of Chancery. The trustees, however, generously declined to accept my resignation; and I, therefore, consented to retain my pastorate, pending an Appeal to the Court of Chancery. That Appeal asked for a modification of the 14th Article of Faith of the Connexion, which pledges all its ministers personally to "hold and maintain the lawfulness of infant-baptism," and also binds them to affirm that "infants ought to be baptized."

Failure of the Appeal. The Appeal to the Court of Chancery took four years to hear and determine. Had it succeeded, I could honourably have retained my position; but the decision of the Judge was unfavourable to the Petitioners. Consequently, the Article on baptism still remained in force; and it continues now to be binding upon every minister of the Countess's Connexion.

President-Elect. At the time of the decision of the Court, I occupied the position of president-elect of the Connexion, which circumstance added greatly to my desire

not to forfeit my ministerial position in the Countess's denomination.

My final Resignation. But I did not, and could not, conscientiously "hold and maintain the lawfulness of infant-baptism;" and, as an honourable man, I could not allow my signature to remain to an Article of Faith which I did not believe. Consequently, I felt myself compelled to withdraw my name from the Article in question, which withdrawal legally involved my surrender of church, parsonage, and stipend—thus terminating a pastorate of eight years' duration.

Baptism often Depreciated. Nearly nine years have now elapsed since my baptism; and I increasingly feel the importance of sound, scriptural teaching on the subject; especially in view of the fact that a strange and lamentable perversion of baptism, as well as of the Lord's Supper, by sacerdotalists and ritualists, is causing many evangelical Christians to depreciate these sacred ordinances, and, in some cases, even to reject them altogether.

My Confession. Two editions of my booklet, "Why I was Baptized," having rapidly sold, I am frequently asked to issue another and more complete work, giving at greater length the chief points of the evidence that led to my change of belief. In complying with this request, I wish, first of all, to express my sorrow that I did not perceive the truth of believers'-baptism at a much earlier period. It is evident to me that the speciousness of much of the literature which I formerly read upon the subject, coupled with the unconscious prejudice which early training and general custom so often produce, caused me to misapprehend what I now regard as the definite teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

No Reflection upon others. I feel it right, however, to say, that I do not, for a moment, make the slightest reflection upon the sincerity or ability of my ministerial brethren and others, who still hold the views which I have abandoned; nor do I presume to judge them in the smallest degree.

The Parties to the Discussion. In the discussion upon which we are entering, there are three distinct parties. The first are called Baptists, or Believers'-Baptists; because they teach that only believers should be baptized. The second are called Pædo-Baptists, or Infant-Baptists; because they teach that even unconscious infants ought to be baptized. The third party may be called Anti-Baptists; because they neglect or even oppose baptism altogether, regarding both that rite and the Lord's Supper as obsolete forms, or "carnal ordinances," intended only for the Jews, or for believers of the apostolic age alone. Akin to this third party, are those who hold that baptism is intended only for believers who may be on the earth during some supposed future stage of the Lord's Second Coming.

The Bible our only Guide. I would, therefore, fervently entreat all who may read these pages prayerfully to lay aside all prejudice, and to seek, with an open mind, to learn what the Word of God actually teaches upon this subject. The Bible, it must be remembered, is our only guide; and by it, as setting forth the mind of God, we shall be judged at the last day.—John xii. 48.

Baptism chiefly a Spiritual Act. Very earnestly do I wish to emphasise the statement that, I do not regard baptism merely as an external ceremony, but as an act of personal consecration to Christ; a divine service of the deepest spiritual significance and importance; and a perpetual ordinance expressly appointed by our Lord for the purpose of symbolising certain foundation-facts and doctrines of the gospel.

The Need of Love. I would also venture to express the hope that my readers and myself, while engaged upon this important subject, may never forget the inspired words of the apostle, "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

NOTE.—The Scripture-references in this book will, in every instance, be made to the Revised Version.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT I WAS TAUGHT IN MY BOYHOOD CONCERNING BAPTISM.

A little Romanist. As my mother was a Roman Catholic, it will not be wondered at that one of the first things which I remember hearing from her lips was that I had been taken when an infant, and baptized into the Roman Catholic church.

Brought up in the Church of England. My father being a Protestant, I was brought up in the Church of England; and when I was old enough to learn the Catechism, and carefully to examine other parts of the Book of Common Prayer, I saw that, according to its teaching, infant-baptism is of the most tremendous importance. This will be seen from the extracts from that venerable book which I now proceed to quote.

The Evangelical Clergy. Before making these quotations, however, I wish to say that I do not reflect upon the conscientiousness of those clergymen of the Church of England who are evangelical and Protestant, and who mourn the spread of sacerdotalism and ritualism in their church with a grief which they cannot express. Some of these clergymen are my personal friends; and they are amongst the most consecrated men that I know. I pray that God's richest blessing may rest upon them, and also upon their work for Him.

Teaching of the Prayer Book. The *Catechism* contains the following statement in answer to the question—"Who gave you this name?"

My godfathers and godmothers in my baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

In *The Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants*, the minister is instructed to offer this prayer:—

We call upon Thee for this infant, that he, coming to Thy holy baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration.

Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin.

Having baptized the child, the minister is to repeat the following thanksgiving:—

We yield Thee hearty thanks that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with Thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for Thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into Thy holy Church.

In *The Ministration of Private Baptism of Children*, the minister is instructed to say to the people:—

This child being born in original sin, and in the wrath of God, is now, by the laver of regeneration in baptism, received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life.

Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is *by baptism* regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church.

The Service for the *Public Baptism of Infants* contains also the following rubric:—

It is certain, by God's Word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.

This rubric, to say the least, certainly seems to cast a doubt upon the salvation of infants who die unbaptized.

Such, indeed, is the importance attached to baptism in the Prayer Book, that all who die unbaptized—even unconscious infants—are classed with persons who have been excommunicated, or who have committed suicide. In fact, the Prayer Book seems to regard infants who have died unbaptized as on a level with the heathen; for it even forbids them Christian burial. This will be evident from the following rubric, which is taken from *The Order for the Burial of the Dead*:—

Here is to be noted, that the Office ensuing is not to be used for any that die unbaptized, or excommunicate, or who have laid violent hands upon themselves.

Such Teaching With such passages as these frequently **dies hard.** rehearsed in my ears by high-church clergymen and others, it is not to be wondered at that, when only a boy, I came to look upon infant-baptism as necessary to salvation. Nor can it occasion surprise that such teaching, implanted age after age in the youthful minds of multitudes, should die slowly, and die hard.

CHAPTER III.

HOW MY EARLY ENQUIRIES WERE LULLED TO SLEEP.

My Conversion. WHEN I was led by the Spirit of God, forty years ago, to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, I soon began to doubt the scripturalness of infant-baptism.

I Enquire about Baptism. As is often the case with young converts, my mind was naturally directed to the subject of baptism, as the divinely-appointed ordinance for those who have repented of sin and believed in Christ. But when I sought advice from various godly men who were highly esteemed, they told me that as I had been baptized in infancy, and as baptism, in any case, was not essential to salvation, I need not trouble myself further about it. Therefore, as might be expected, I yielded to their opinion: but I must say that my mind was not at rest. And no wonder! For the words of Christ kept ringing in my ears, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark xvi. 16.

From the time of my conversion, however, I ceased to have any faith in the saving efficacy of infant-baptism, as expressed in the Prayer Book; and I used to wonder, in the early days of my Christian life, why ministers of other denominations still continued that ceremony, when they taught that it was not necessarily accompanied by any spiritual grace.

Dissatisfied. Four years after my conversion, when I was a student for the ministry, at Rotherham College, the revered president, the Rev. Dr. Falding, delivered to the students a course of lectures in favour of infant-baptism. Up to the last two or three discourses, several of the students were not a little dissatisfied with them; and one of them said to me, "If the Doctor does not give us something stronger in favour of infant-baptism, I shall turn Baptist."

Silenced but not Convinced. But the last two or three lectures mystified and confused us, by affirming a supposed substitution of infant-baptism for infant-

circumcision; but I must again say that my judgment was not satisfied. I was confounded, but not convinced; silenced, but not conquered. The venerable doctor told us also a great deal about the Fathers, but very little about the Apostles. Still, I was prepared, as a young student, to acquiesce in general opinion and custom; for I was too much occupied with my studies, and too inexperienced, to undertake a really independent and thorough investigation of the subject.

An Awkward Request. One day, just before the Doctor closed his lecture, I ventured to ask him if he would give us a text of Scripture which teaches infant-baptism. On hearing my request, my fellow-students smiled, and the worthy Doctor frowned; but, to my surprise, no attempt was made to find the text.

During the remainder of my studies, at Nottingham Institute, Cheshunt College, and the Universities of Heidelberg and Tübingen, I heard nothing whatever about infant-baptism.

I Practise Infant-Baptism. In the second year of my ministry, the year 1870, I had, however, occasion to study the question of baptism, as I discovered, to my annoyance, that several members of my church openly sympathised with believers'-immersion; but although I saw much weighty evidence on the side of the Baptist brethren, yet I saw also several serious difficulties; and after reading the works of Thorn, Halley, Bushnell, Guthrie, and other eminent writers, I came to the conclusion that, regarding infant-baptism mainly as a dedication, I could, without violating my conscience, continue to baptize infants.

The Secret of my Error. Looking back upon the thirty years which have elapsed since then, I can see clearly that at that time I was biassed by my early prejudices and by general custom; that I failed to perceive the real nature and significance of baptism; and that my reading was one-sided and insufficient. But my great mistake was, that I paid too much attention to the teaching of men, and did not sufficiently study the Holy Scriptures, which should have been my sole authority.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW THE LORD LED ME.

Providential HAD not certain providential incidents
Leadings. occurred in my life, I have no doubt that I should have continued to practise the ceremony of infant-baptism to the end of my ministry. But, time after time, as the years rolled by, my mind was directed to the question of believers'-baptism; and was thus gradually and divinely prepared to receive fuller light and clearer convictions in relation to it.

A Niece First of all, one of my nieces, who was
sets me an rarely gifted, and who was brought up in the
Example. Church of England, changed her views on baptism, and was publicly immersed. When I heard of this, I confess to being somewhat amused; and I am sorry to say that I sneered at what seemed to me her erratic folly in being, as I then called it, "*re-baptized*." Soon after her baptism she came to see me. I then put to her the question, "What do you think is the best book in favour of your new views concerning baptism?" She calmly replied, "The New Testament." Chagrined by her clever answer, I asked again, "Then what do you consider to be the strongest argument in favour of believers'-baptism?" She considered a moment, and then replied, "The example of our blessed Lord; for He Himself was baptized in the river Jordan." To these cogent answers I felt it difficult to reply; but they led to a conversation which caused me to look less unfavourably upon the course she had taken.

The Revised Another incident which had no little
New weight with me, was the publication, in the
Testament. year 1881, of the Revised Version of the New Testament. I found that certain emendations in the Greek Text, also several of the revised renderings and marginal readings, were decidedly favourable to the views of the Baptists. This struck me as all the more remarkable, when I remembered that among the large number of divines who

constituted the Company of Revisers, only one or two professed Baptist views.

Extensive Travel. Another fact was, the effect upon my mind of extensive travel, and much intercourse with Christian people in many parts of the world. For fourteen years I had laboured as a Mission Preacher; nearly seven of those years being spent in South Africa, Tasmania, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. During those years of travel, I had much fellowship with Christians of all denominations; and my range of vision was, I think, enlarged. The subject of baptism frequently formed the theme of conversation, sometimes to my irritation and annoyance. To my surprise, however, I found that many of the most devoted and prominent Christians whom I met held Baptist views, and had been baptized; although some of them had not joined the Baptist denomination, but were still members of the Church of England or of some other church practising infant-baptism. This disposed me to look upon those views with less prejudice, and, after a time, led me to regard them with respect, and to listen to arguments in their favour with patience and even interest.

I hide It was in this state of mind that I commenced my ministry in Emmanuel Church, **"Theodosia Ernest."** Tunbridge Wells, on January 6th, 1889. I was still able, without violating my conscience, to baptize infants, regarding the ceremony simply as an act of dedication; but I had no desire to resume the study of the subject, as I had a fear that infant-baptism, if it be considered as really baptism and not merely as dedication, might prove to be both scripturally and historically indefensible. Accordingly, when, in January, 1891, my friend, Mr. Miner, sent me "Theodosia Ernest," a book in favour of believers' baptism, I immediately put it away out of sight, behind the row of books on the top shelf of my library, and playfully remarked, "I'm not going to trouble myself with you, my boy!"

One of my Workers is Baptized. But although I could place the book where my eye could not see it, the Lord, in His providence, again and again brought the sub-

ject before my mind. One day I called upon a lady who was a member of my congregation; when her daughter, who was one of my workers, told me that she had seen in the Scriptures the truth of believers'-baptism, and had recently been baptized. She then asked me what I thought upon the subject; and I felt constrained to say that I greatly respected her convictions, and thought that there was much to be said for the views which she held.

My Conscience Meanwhile, I continued to baptize infants; **is Troubled.** but as I did so, my conscience began to trouble me, and to ask during the baptismal service, "Is this scriptural?" "Is this what your Lord and Master meant by baptism?"

Alarmed by I was, moreover, distressed to notice the **Superstition.** superstition with which people sometimes came to me to ask baptism for their children. Strangers would come on a Saturday evening occasionally, and, adopting the formula usual in such cases, would say to me, "Please, sir, I've called to ask if you would do my baby to-morrow." After briefly conversing with them, I could easily detect their superstition. They evidently held the opinion, alas! too common, that infant-baptism is a kind of spiritual vaccination; and that just as the body has to be protected, by vaccination, from smallpox, so the soul has to be protected, by infant-baptism, from damnation!

Distressed. After such an interview, I used to feel distressed; and the question would arise in my mind, "Is this what St. Peter meant when he said, 'Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?'—Acts ii. 38. Or is it what St. Paul meant when he wrote the words, 'Buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead?'"—Col. ii. 12.

Shocked. On one occasion, I was greatly shocked to observe that a father, who presented his child to me for baptism, was in a state of maudlin intoxication!

An Important Conversation. One day, when I was calling upon the dear friend to whom this book is dedicated, and who was visiting Tunbridge Wells, he asked me to fix a time when he might have an opportunity of bringing the subject of baptism clearly before me. At first I refused, and said to him that I did not think it was worth while at my time of life to re-open the subject, in view of the serious consequences which might ensue. After an earnest conversation, however, I consented.

My Friend's Arguments. When the day for the interview arrived, I listened patiently for fully an hour to my friend's remarks; and at their termination I said, "Well, you have not adduced anything in the nature of fact or argument which I have not heard or read before; but you have shewn me one thing, namely, that if what you say is correct, it follows that I have never been really baptized, and have, therefore, not yet obeyed my Lord in this respect." He then asked me to read prayerfully three books which he offered me. One was entitled, "Seven Reasons for Believers'-Baptism," by the Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A.; the other was called, "How Readest Thou?" by the Rev. Frank White; and the third was an American book entitled, "Theodosia Ernest, or The Heroine of Faith."

His Exposition. When I pointed out to my friend what might be the consequences, if I became convinced of the scripturalness of believers'-baptism, I shall never forget his reply. He said, "Have you not consecrated yourself fully to Christ?" I answered, "Yes." Then, said he, "Never be afraid of searching for the truth, or of following fully your Redeemer. Is it not written, 'They that trust in the Lord are as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth for ever?'"—Psalm cxxv. 1.

On the Way to Truth. After some persuasion I consented to read the books, and to pray for light on their contents; and the moment I yielded, and thus admitted frankly the possibility that I might have held erroneous views in regard to baptism, there came into my heart such a sweet sense of peace as I can never fail to remember.

Why I Hesitated. If any of my readers feel disposed to censure me for my reluctance to re-open the question of baptism, I cannot complain. But I would ask them to consider what a change of belief on this subject appeared to involve. I saw that if I adopted the teaching and practice of believers'-baptism, I should, in all probability, have to resign my pastorate, break up my home, and practically commence life afresh; and that, too, when I had almost reached my fiftieth year. So far as I myself was concerned, these things would not, I trust, have deterred me from walking in the path of obedience to my Lord. But there were others whom I had to consider, to whom I was bound by very tender and sacred ties of domestic affection. And it was the fear of plunging them into sorrow and grief which caused me to hesitate, when urged to take the subject of baptism into serious and prayerful consideration.

Clear Conviction. I read the books, however, with earnest attention and much prayer; and month after month searched the Scriptures upon the question as I had never done before. I also obtained and carefully examined several of the best books in favour of infant-baptism; but the more I studied and prayed, the more unsatisfactory did the arguments for infant-baptism appear, and the more strongly was the conviction forced upon me, that infant-baptism is not a scriptural ordinance, but is what Dr. Jacob, that eminent Church of England divine, has well styled it, merely "an ecclesiastical institution."

The Bible Supreme. Another point which I ought to mention was this:—For many years there had been gradually forming in my mind a firmer conviction of the authority of the Holy Scriptures as the divinely-appointed Rule of faith and practice. I had, of course, many years previously, accepted Chillingworth's familiar statement, "The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." But it is one thing to accept this as a principle; it is quite another thing to apply it to the various doctrines and ceremonies which are generally accepted amongst Christian people.

The attacks made upon the Bible in recent years, had

driven me back to a re-consideration of the inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of Holy Scripture; and had led me to value that sacred Book more than ever, as the revelation of God's will. I saw, moreover, that the Bible was not only to be admired, prized, and loved, but also revered and obeyed; that to its teachings, my understanding, heart, will, and life, were to be submitted; and that as a minister of Christ, I was not to believe or teach any doctrine, or to practise any ceremony, which did not possess a scriptural sanction. But when I came to apply this test to infant-baptism, I perceived that I must either disavow and abandon that ceremony, or continue to pursue a course for which I could find no authority in the Word of God. Weighed in the balances of the Bible, infant-baptism was found wanting.

Infant-Baptism Moreover, I had long mourned over the and rapid spread of sacerdotalism throughout our **Sacerdotalism.** land; and had endeavoured to warn my flock against its grave and insidious errors. But I had, at length, come to see that some of the deadliest of these errors have their fountain-head in infant-baptism; and that they cannot be fought successfully except by banishing that ceremony from our churches, by following the explicit teaching of the Word of God, and by practising the ordinance of baptism as Christ observed and commanded it.

Change of Standpoint. From the incidents enumerated in this chapter, it will be evident that my change of opinion on baptism was the result of many years of thought, of reading, and of providential guidance. It will further be evident that, as the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon has well defined such a mental change, there had taken place in me not only a change of views, but also a change of standpoint. I had, in fact, come to this position, that I must for ever turn away from tradition and custom, from merely human teaching and inference, and also from my own personal wishes and predilections; in a word, that I must stand entirely by the clear and definite testimony of God's Holy Book.

The Inward Conflict. It will also be evident to the reader, that I did not change my views without a keen

mental struggle, and a prolonged spiritual conflict. Sometimes, indeed, I rejoiced, as a faint hope arose within me, that there might possibly be a doubt as to some detail of the evidence regarding the great questions in dispute ; and that, such being the case, I might still be able conscientiously to continue to practise infant-baptism and to retain my pastorate. But such hopes were, time after time, dispelled in the light of fuller information, by the testimony of the most eminent Infant-Baptists themselves, by the incontestable facts of history, and by the clear and authoritative teaching of the Word of God.

The Plan of this Book. The nature of the arguments by which I arrived at definite conviction, will be briefly shewn in the following chapters. Some of these chapters record the substance of lengthened interviews with learned ministers of the gospel, and with other devout Christian people. In order however, to prevent a repetition of the various points we discussed, I have blended together various conversations held on different occasions ; but in so doing, I trust I have not dealt unfairly with the opinions of those who differed from me.

Perhaps it may be advisable to state that the interviews here recorded are, of necessity, much abbreviated ; and that I have, of course, suppressed everything which might lead to the identification of those who did me the honour of expressing, in the course of conversation, their honest convictions. Their real names, therefore, are not given in these pages.

CHAPTER V.

IS BAPTISM OF ANY IMPORTANCE NOW?

A Keswick Companion. IN the month of July, 1892, as I was returning to London by rail from the Keswick Convention, I happened to travel in the same compartment as Mr. Thomas Newland, a devoted Christian gentleman, and a member of the Society of Friends. When I told him that my mind was deeply concerned about baptism, he became somewhat agitated, and addressed me as follows:—

He Objects to Baptism. “I am astonished that you should trouble yourself about a mere outward ceremony. Baptism could never have had much significance, and it can be of no importance now. The letter killeth; it is the Spirit that giveth life. Outward ceremonies are merely the shell of Christianity; what men need is the kernel.”

The Example and Teaching of Christ. “And I am equally astonished,” I replied, “that you should speak thus concerning a solemn ordinance which our Lord Himself honoured by observing, and which all His apostles, in obedience to His command, inculcated and practised. It is true that inward grace and Christian character are of supreme value, and that no outward ceremonies can ever take their place; but, surely, the New Testament shews conclusively that our Lord and His apostles regarded baptism as a matter of great significance and importance.”

The Appeal to Holy Scripture. “If you could prove that from the New Testament,” responded Mr. Newland, “I would most readily submit; for I entirely approve of the teaching we have recently been hearing at the Keswick Convention, namely, that as followers of Christ, we are to be absolutely surrendered to Him, and entirely obedient to His will, as revealed to us in His Word.”

I responded, by asking his prayerful attention to the following observations:—

Is Baptism of any Importance now?

BAPTISM A DIVINE APPOINTMENT.

What saith the Scripture ?

1. God Himself appointed baptism.
2. The Pharisees and others, in refusing to be baptized, "rejected the counsel of God."
3. Christ Himself was baptized.
4. Jesus called baptism a part of "righteousness."
5. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit sanctioned and blessed it.
6. During our Lord's ministry, His disciples baptized those who believed on Him.

Textual Proofs.

1. "He that *sent* me to baptize."—John i. 33.
2. "And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him."—Luke vii. 29, 30.
3. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him."—Matt. iii. 13.
4. "John would have hindered Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."—Matt. iii. 14, 15.
5. "And straightway coming up out of the water, Jesus saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art My Beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased."—Mark i. 10, 11.
6. "The Lord knew how that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John—although Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples."—John iv. 1, 2.

7. The Lord Jesus, after His death and resurrection, again commanded baptism.
8. The apostles, after the ascension of Christ, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, baptized those who believed.
9. Baptism was then felt to be both an obligation and a privilege; otherwise, how can we account for the earnestness of the Ethiopian, in asking that he might at once be permitted to observe the sacred rite ?
10. The apostle Paul was baptized.
11. The reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit was spoken of by St. Peter, not as a substitute for the ordinance of baptism, but as an urgent reason for its immediate observance.
12. The ordinance of baptism is referred to in the New Testament at least sixty times.
7. "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you."—Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.
8. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."—Acts ii. 38.
"They, then, that received his word were baptized."—Acts ii. 41.
9. "And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized ?"—Acts viii. 36.
10. Ananias said, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His Name."—Acts xxii. 16.
"And he arose and was baptized."—Acts ix. 18.
11. "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ."—Acts x. 47, 48.

CHAPTER VI.

DID THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT SUPPLANT THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM?

WHILE I was making the remarks recorded in the previous chapter, Mr. Newland read aloud the several passages of Scripture referred to; and when I asked him if he did not think they proved that Christ and His apostles regarded baptism as a matter of great importance, he replied:—

Perplexed. “Kindly let me think over the matter for an hour or two. The cumulative force of the passages which we have been reading is very considerable; but some of the points suggested are new to me; and they require serious consideration.”

While the train was speeding on its way, Mr. Newland remained silent for nearly two hours, and searched his Bible the whole time. When he resumed the conversation, he said:—

On the Wrong Scent. “I confess to you that, as a member of the Society of Friends, I do not like the idea of baptism, or even of any outward ceremony whatsoever. Hence, I have hitherto disregarded both baptism and the Lord’s Supper; and I have been trying during the last hour or two to prove to myself that the baptisms recorded after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost were not water-baptisms at all, but baptisms of the Spirit. I have, however, at length felt compelled to relinquish the attempt.”

John’s Baptisms “And no wonder,” I replied. “If we go back to John’s baptisms, it will be evident with Water. they were baptisms with water; for we read that ‘there went out unto him all the country of Judæa, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.’”—Mark i. 5.

"This passage," responded Mr. Newland, "settles the question as to the element of John's baptisms. They were evidently water-baptisms."

No Alteration Indicated. "Yes," I replied. "And there is no passage of Scripture which indicates, when subsequent baptisms by apostles or evangelists are recorded, that any other kind of baptism was meant than that with which John had made the Jews familiar."

"Quite so," said Mr. Newland. "And I perceive that in the instance of the Ethiopian eunuch, water is four times distinctly mentioned."—Acts viii. 36—39.

Import of the Eunuch's Baptism. "This incident of the eunuch," I added, "in which, as you say, water is four times mentioned, coupled with the fact that there is no text in the New Testament which indicates that a change had been made in the element of baptism since the time of John the Baptist, ought to convince every one that the baptisms in the apostolic age must have been of the same kind as those ministered by our Lord's forerunner, namely, water-baptisms."

John's Prediction concerning Christ. "So far as this point is concerned," said Mr. Newland, "I cannot but admit that you have a good case. But allow me to remind you that John the Baptist said, 'I indeed baptize you with water; but Christ shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.'—Matt. iii. 11. Does not this show that when Christ came, He was to set aside water-baptism, and substitute for it the baptism of the Holy Spirit?"

What it Means. "Certainly not," I replied. "It simply means that, while it was the privilege of John and others to baptize with water, Christ alone would possess the prerogative of baptizing with the Holy Ghost. This will be clearly seen from the records of the teaching and practice of the apostles and evangelists, after Christ had baptized them with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. For, as these Spirit-filled men went forth preaching the gospel, whether amongst Jews, Samaritans, or Gentiles, whenever details are recorded of the results of

their labours, we find that immediate attention was given to the baptism of those who believed. And, by-the-by, have you ever noticed the case of Cornelius and his friends?"

"What is there special about their case?" asked Mr. Newland.

Cornelius and his Friends. "I do not know that there is anything special about it," I replied; "but it was the first case in which the gospel was preached to the Gentiles; and we read that while St. Peter was preaching, 'the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word.'—Acts x. 44. But does the narrative end there? Or does the apostle say that because they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, therefore, they need not be baptized with water? Nay, verily. He at once said to the Jewish brethren who accompanied him, 'Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ.'"—Acts x. 47, 48.

"That is, certainly, a most important and striking passage," remarked Mr. Newland.

The Baptism of the Spirit not a Substitute for Water-Baptism. "Indeed it is," I replied; "for it proves conclusively that instead of the baptism of the Holy Spirit taking the place of the baptism with water, it was, on the contrary, regarded by St. Peter and his brethren as an evidence that these Gentiles, being believers, were qualified to obey with faith and love the commandment of the Lord Jesus, and receive the ordinance of baptism."

Did St. Peter Forget the Predication of John? "Well, I must admit," responded Mr. Newland, "that I have never before duly considered this passage. But, after all, the apostle Peter was only human, and liable to err; and he may possibly have forgotten the text where John the Baptist said that, whereas he could only baptize with water, Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost."

No! “But,” I replied, “we find from the next **He distinctly** chapter that Peter did not forget this state-
Remembered ment of John. On the contrary, when he
it. afterwards went up to Jerusalem, and
formally reported to the apostles and the church respect-
ing his mission to the household of Cornelius, he said, ‘As I
began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, even as on
us at the beginning. And I *remembered* the word of the
Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water;
but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. If then God
gave unto them the like gift as He did also unto us, when
we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I
could withstand God?’—Acts xi. 15—17. We see, there-
fore, that as St. Peter found that these Gentile brethren
had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and were
thus sealed by Him as disciples of Christ Jesus, he felt
he could no longer withstand God. Hence, he forthwith
‘commanded them to be baptized in the Name of Jesus
Christ.’”—Acts x. 48.

The Reception Mr. Newland remained silent after the
of the Spirit, above remarks, and I did not wonder at his
a Reason so doing; for the case of Cornelius and his
for Baptism. Gentile brethren is an unanswerable proof
that the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit does not
supplant the rite of believers’-baptism. It proves, further,
that St. Peter regarded the reception of the Holy Spirit
by Cornelius and his friends, not as a substitute for baptism,
but as an urgent reason for immediate obedience to that
solemn ordinance.

A It is a cheering sign of our times that
Sign of our many of God’s people are beginning to see
Times. this, and to perceive also that baptism was
intended to signify and manifest the entire consecration of
the believer—the full surrender of spirit, soul, and body
to Jesus Christ as Lord. Hence, numbers of earnest
Christians, of various denominations, have, in recent years,
gladly obeyed their Lord in receiving His ordinance of
baptism. The names of some of the more prominent of
these will be given in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

DID ST. PAUL DEPRECIATE BAPTISM?

AFTER a brief period of reflection, Mr. Newland resumed the conversation by saying:—

Partly “I have been much impressed with your **Convinced.** remarks, and particularly by those referring to Cornelius and his household. It is clear to me that as St. Peter commanded them to be baptized, and that, too, after they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, he must have regarded baptism with water as a matter of great importance.”

“Thank you,” I replied, “for that honest admission.”

A Misunder- “But,” continued Mr. Newland, “there is
stood Text. a passage in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, which seems to imply that St. Paul rather depreciated baptism; for he thanks God that he had baptized only a few of his Corinthian converts; and he also says that Christ sent him ‘not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.’”—1 Cor. i. 14, 17.

Its real “It is quite a mistake,” I replied, “to
Meaning. suppose that St. Paul depreciates baptism, as the following remarks will shew:—

1. “In his various Epistles to the churches, St. Paul assumes that most of the members, if not all, had been baptized.—Rom. vi. 3, 4; 1 Cor. i. 13; Gal. iii. 27; Eph. iv. 5; Col. ii. 12.

2. “He reminds even these Corinthians that he had himself baptized several of their number; and he mentions by name Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas, as having been baptized by him.—1 Cor. i. 14—16.

3. “Although he did not, as a rule, personally baptize any but the most prominent of his converts, yet there is evidence to show that he arranged to have all his other

converts baptized by his co-workers. This, it is clear, was the case even amongst the Corinthians themselves; for we read that after Paul had preached the gospel to them, 'Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.'—Acts xviii. 8.

4. "Paul himself definitely states the reason why he was thankful that he had personally baptized so few of the Corinthians. His words are these:—'Lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name.'—1 Cor. i. 15.

"To the apostle, baptism was evidently a very solemn and important ordinance. But when he learnt of the factions into which the Corinthian converts were divided, and that they were saying among themselves, 'I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ;'—then he wrote his first Epistle, rebuking them for their sectarian partizanship, and expressing his joy that, as he had personally baptized only a few of them, no one could say he had himself formed a Pauline party by baptizing into his own name, rather than into the Name of Christ."

"Well, I must say," exclaimed Mr. Newland, "that your explanation helps me considerably. But I have another question to ask, if I am not wearying you."

"By no means," I replied. "The more difficulties you can bring forward, the more I shall be pleased."

CHAPTER VIII.

WAS BAPTISM DESIGNED TO BE PERPETUAL?

Is Baptism of any Permanent Use? SHORTLY after we had passed Rugby, Mr. Newland said:—"As we shall not be long before we reach London, I should like now to ask the question to which I referred a few minutes ago. It is this:—What reason have you for thinking that Christ designed baptism to be perpetual? Did it not exhaust its utility during the ministry of Christ and His apostles, as the outward sign of the new religion?"

I replied as follows:—

Baptism Commanded by Christ. 1. "Baptism was commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Only He, therefore, could repeal it. As, however, the New Testament nowhere records that He did so, His command to be baptized is binding now upon all His followers, and will continue to be so until He shall abrogate it.

Universal: therefore Perpetual. 2. "In St. Mark xvi. 15, Christ commanded His followers to 'go into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation;' and we read that He added the following reason for the command, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' He thus connected baptism with faith; not meaning thereby that baptism actually saves us, but that it is to be regarded as the outward and visible sign, or symbol, of the saving faith already dwelling in the heart."

"I am rather surprised at your quoting from the closing verses of St. Mark," said Mr. Newland; "for you are doubtless aware that their authenticity is questioned."

A Critical Objection Met. "Quite so," I replied. "The last twelve verses are omitted from the two oldest Greek manuscripts. Therefore, if the verse I have quoted stood alone; or if it were not amply substan-

tiated by other and undoubted scriptural authority; I would not have adduced it in argument, although there is strong evidence of its authenticity, going back as far as the second century. But, at all events, the verse affords a striking testimony as to the opinions and practice of the early church, in associating baptism with faith. You will not, however, dispute the authenticity of the solemn words of the great Commission, as it is recorded in St. Matthew xxviii. 18—20. In that Commission our Lord commanded His followers to ‘make disciples of *all the nations*,’ and to baptize them ‘into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.’

Baptism still “Moreover, our Lord foresaw all the differences of climate and also the diversities in national manners, customs and sentiment, which the gospel in all ages and in all countries would have to confront; but He has not left on record a single word to indicate that any one of these things was to be allowed to weaken the obligation of His disciples to observe the solemn rite of Christian baptism.

Never Abrogated or Modified. 3. “Accordingly, His followers, after the baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, went everywhere preaching the gospel; and wherever details are given, we find that their converts, Jew and Gentile, were baptized. And in none of the apostolic writings do we find one word to sanction the idea that baptism might be modified; or that it was to be observed for only a limited period, or within a limited area; or that it was intended for any special circumstances whatsoever in the history of the Church.

Baptism as Significant now as in the Apostolic Age. 4. “Moreover, baptism serves exactly the same purposes now as it did in the apostolic age. It is still a cross to be taken up by the believer, as a profession of his faith and allegiance; it is still a witness to the same great Christian facts, and a symbol of the same blessed spiritual truths. We have no more liberty, therefore, to abandon it than we have to abandon the preaching of the gospel itself; for they both form a part of the same divine Commission.

Our obvious duty, as Christians, must be loyally and lovingly to obey the command of our Lord in this matter; to do so with faith and love, with gladness and alacrity, and exactly in the way that He has commanded.

St. Paul 5. "In Acts xix. 1—7, there is an incident which shews that, in the judgment of St. John's Paul, baptism, far from being regarded as Disciples. 'a relic of the preceding dispensation' and as 'a decayed institution,' connoted much more in the apostolic age, and was therefore deemed of greater importance at that period, than when it was originated by John the Baptist. You will remember the incident, where St. Paul found a number of disciples at Ephesus, who had formerly received the baptism of John, but who had not yet heard that the Holy Ghost was given. What did the apostle do? He instructed them more perfectly in the Christian faith; and then, indeed, had them all *re-baptized*!"

"But was not their baptism a spiritual baptism—a baptism of the Holy Ghost?"—asked Mr. Newland.

Water and Spirit: "Certainly not, at least in the first A Question of instance," I answered; "for we read Order. that 'they were baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus,' which certainly indicates the ordinance of baptism.—Acts xix. 5. It was subsequent to this that they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Accordingly, after the inspired writer has mentioned the fact of their *re-baptism*, he proceeds to say, 'When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.' Thus you will perceive that they were, first of all, *re-baptized*; and afterwards they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"It is interesting to compare the order adhered to on this occasion with that mentioned in the case of Cornelius and his friends.—Acts x. 47, 48. There, the Holy Spirit was given before baptism: here, the Holy Spirit is bestowed after baptism. In each case, however, the baptismal ordinance was honoured by obedient and immediate observance."

Were the Apostles mistaken? “But may not the apostles have been mistaken, in continuing baptism after the day of Pentecost?”—asked Mr. Newland.

A Dangerous Objection. “Pardon me,” I replied, “if I say that I can scarcely believe you raise this argument seriously. There is not a single verse in the New Testament which supports your objection. The whole tenour of the apostolic writings is against it. And if you allow yourself to think that the apostles were mistaken in one thing, where are you going to stop? Your objection strikes a fatal blow at the inspiration and authority of the New Testament itself. Moreover, if, in so prominent and so important a matter as baptism, the apostles went astray, where was the fulfilment of our Lord’s promise that the ‘Spirit of Truth should guide them into all the truth?’—John xvi. 13. If they erred in reference to baptism, what guarantee have we that, in anything else they rightly interpreted the mind of their Master? Surely, in every such matter they were led into all the truth by the Spirit of Truth, and were enabled infallibly to declare the will of our Lord.”

A Manly Acknowledgment. “Well,” said Mr. Newland, “I am a Quaker; and, as such, I have been taught to attach no importance to outward ceremonies; but I must say, your arguments have shewn me that I require to reconsider the whole question; and I promise you I will do so. I feel, also, that I ought to thank you for making our long journey from Keswick to London so pleasant and profitable, by drawing my notice to a subject which ought long ago to have engaged my serious and prayerful attention.”

Baptism not to be Slighted. “I am glad of our conversation,” I replied; “and I would add that, as baptism is an obligation imposed upon each individual believer, so also it is incumbent upon all Christian denominations—and upon yours, of course, among them. It was commanded by our Lord and Master; and no section of His Church may disregard it. ‘If ye love Me,’ said He, ‘ye will keep My commandments.’”—John xiv. 15.

CHAPTER IX.

DID JOHN BAPTIZE UNCONSCIOUS INFANTS?

A My valued friend, the Rev. John Thorpe, **Congregational** a worthy Congregational minister, called **Objector.** upon me one morning, and addressed me as follows :—

“ I understand that you are contemplating a change of opinion on baptism. Am I correctly informed ? ”

“ Yes,” I replied.

“ Such being the case,” answered Mr. Thorpe, “ as I have long taken a deep interest in that subject, I should like to talk it over with you, if you have no objection.”

“ Not the least,” I answered. “ On the contrary, I should like it very much ; and if you are willing, we will commence at once by considering what was the baptism which was ministered by John the Baptist ? ”

“ We could not do better,” replied Mr. Thorpe ; “ and I would venture to say, that with me the chief matter in dispute is not as to the mode of baptism, but as to the persons whom John baptized. When I was a young man, I used to contend in favour of baptism by sprinkling ; but, after years of study, I was forced to the conclusion that, in the days of John the Baptist and also of the apostles, baptism was generally performed by immersion. Indeed, this is, practically, the testimony of Dr. Wall, Dean Stanley, and Principal Cunningham. Therefore, the only point which now concerns me is, Who were the subjects of John’s baptism ? ”

The Subjects of John’s Baptism. “ Just so,” I replied. “ Did John baptize babies ? That is the point for us to consider ; and if we are to abide by the New Testament, I feel compelled to conclude that he did not.

To make the matter clear, I will read to you a statement which I prepared some time ago."

JOHN'S BAPTISM NOT INFANT-BAPTISM, FOR—

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. It was associated with the reception of a warning to "flee from the wrath to come."—Matt. iii. 7. | 1. But infants cannot comprehend any such warning. |
| 2. It proceeded upon the principle of individual responsibility and personal conviction, and not upon that of physical descent.—Matt. iii. 9. | 2. But infants are incapable of either responsibility or conviction. |
| 3. It was the "baptism of repentance unto remission of sins."—Mark i. 4. | 3. But infants cannot repent. |
| 4. It was accompanied by the confession of sins.—Matt. iii. 6. | 4. But infants cannot confess sins. |
| 5. It was to be associated with "fruit worthy of repentance."—Matt. iii. 8. | 5. But infants cannot produce such fruit. |
| 6. It was to be accompanied by a belief "on Him Which should come after him, that is, on Jesus."—Acts xix. 3, 4. | 6. But infants are incapable of believing or disbelieving in Him. |

"These six points," I continued, "seem to me to make it certain, that John did not baptize any but those who professed repentance of sin, and faith in the coming Christ.

John sometimes **Refused Baptism.** "Many persons, indeed, who applied to John for baptism were apparently rejected; as he was not satisfied with their moral and spiritual condition."—Matt. iii. 7—12.

"Of **Repentance and "unto Repentance.** "I do not see how I can oppose you so far as you have gone," responded Mr. Thorpe; "but did not John say that he baptized 'unto repentance?'—Matt. iii. 11. And does not this imply that baptism was intended rather to lead to repentance?"

How John's Baptism was both. "That cannot be his meaning," I replied; "for, surely, no one will contend that the 'baptism *unto* repentance' is inconsistent with the 'baptism *of* repentance?' The baptism of John was a 'baptism *of* repentance,' inasmuch as it pre-supposed and required repentance in order to its proper reception. Infants, therefore, could not be included among its recipients. It was also a 'baptism *unto* repentance,' inasmuch as repentance must ever be continuous; not merely a momentary act, but an abiding state—a fixed and growing purpose to live a new life. So that repentance is, at once, a pre-requisite of baptism, and also one of its ends or objects."

A Common Misquotation. "But," interrupted Mr. Thorpe, "does not the New Testament say that John's baptism was a 'baptism unto the remission of sins?'"

"No," I replied, "it does not."

"But, surely, you are mistaken," exclaimed Mr. Thorpe; "for I remember the phrase quite well. And it has always seemed to me that, as John's baptism was a baptism unto, or for, the remission of sins, this remission pointed to an experience subsequent to baptism; hence, it might reasonably be adduced in favour of the idea that John baptized infants, and that he did so for the purpose of introducing them into a state in which their future sins might be remitted."

Repentance, Baptism, and Remission. "It is unnecessary," I responded, "to enquire whether your reasoning is sound or not; because the statement upon which it is based is inaccurate. The Scriptures nowhere state that John's baptism was a 'baptism unto remission of sins!' On the contrary, they state that it was a 'baptism *of* repentance unto remission of sins'—Mark i. 4. This is an entirely different thing. The essential act is not baptism, but repentance. Baptism is neither the instrument nor the condition in reference to the remission of sins, but simply the outward sign of inward repentance, and God's declaration to the recipient, that, through Christ, repentance is followed by remission. In other words, John's baptism, as primarily a baptism of confession of sins, indicated a

repentance actually experienced ; while it symbolically proclaimed a remission which, through repentance, had already been received."

Repentance must Precede Baptism. "The same truth is taught by St. Peter in Acts ii. 38, where we read, 'Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins.' Again, we read in Acts xxii. 16, 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His Name.' Here, the repentance, or the calling upon God, is that inward qualification for the remission of sins, of which baptism is the outward declaration and sign. Thus, you will see that as baptism implied repentance, and as infants are incapable of repentance, they could not have been the subjects of John's baptism."

"Well," said Mr. Thorpe, "your explanation has certainly removed a difficulty from my mind ; and I readily admit that there is no direct evidence in the New Testament to shew that John practised infant-baptism. I should like, however, at some future interview, to enquire what was the attitude of our Lord and His apostles regarding baptism."

"That we will consider," I replied, "on some future occasion."

John's Baptism a Preparation for Christian Baptism. I may here say that the argument of this chapter derives additional force from the fact that John's baptism, which was ministered solely by himself, was only initial and preparatory, and was designed for Israel, to prepare them for the coming Christ.—John i. 31 ; Acts xiii. 23, 24. Solemn and definite as were its demands for repentance and forsaking of sin, its intention was to point the way, and lead up to, full Christian baptism, which connoted much more than John's baptism, both as to its doctrinal significance and also as to the personal profession and spiritual character of those who were baptized.

CHAPTER X.

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

To my surprise, my friend, Mr. Thorpe, came to see me on the very next evening, so deeply interested was he in the subject of our conversation. After a few observations on his part, I said :—

“ With your permission, Mr. Thorpe, we will, on the present occasion, consider the attitude of our Lord in regard to baptism.”

“ With all my heart,” responded Mr. Thorpe.

Christ Applies for Baptism. “ Well, then,” I proceeded, “ I would ask you to observe, that our Lord evidently regarded baptism as a matter of great, and of personal importance ; for He Himself, when about thirty years of age, travelled all the way from Nazareth—a distance of eighty miles—for the express purpose of being baptized in the river Jordan.”—Matt. iii. 13—17.

“ That is so,” responded Mr Thorpe.

He would not be Hindered. “ Yes,” I added, “ and when ‘ John would have hindered Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me ? ’—Christ insisted upon observing the solemn rite, giving as His reason for so doing that, ‘ thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.’—Matt. iii. 15. To my mind, it is a most impressive fact, that the spotless Son of God, at the commencement of His public ministry, in loyal obedience to His Father’s will, went down into the waters of Jordan—which some have explained to mean ‘ the river of death or judgment’—and was solemnly baptized therein.”

“ What teaching do you suppose Christ desired to convey by His being baptized ? ” asked Mr. Thorpe.

What Baptism meant to Christ Himself. “ As regards Himself, personally,” I answered, “ baptism meant that He was dead to sin and self, yea, to everything but the will of His Father, to Whom, in baptism, He publicly

surrendered and dedicated Himself. It also prefigured His death and resurrection.

What Christ's Baptism meant to His Followers. "As regards His followers, His baptism was an example for their imitation; and it was also an evidence of His complete identification with them as their Substitute, Redeemer, and Surety."

"You may be right," said Mr. Thorpe; "but how can you prove that Christ's baptism was intended to be an example for the imitation of His followers?"

Christ's Baptism an Example to us. "You will see the proof," I replied, "in the fact that Christ called baptism an act of 'righteousness,' and that, soon after His own baptism, His disciples baptized multitudes.

"The Apostle John, for instance, informs us that 'Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judæa, and there He tarried with them, and baptized'—John iii. 22. So numerous, indeed, were these baptisms, that we read it was reported to the Pharisees that 'Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John'—John iv. 1, 2. Thus you will perceive that the solemn rite to which our Lord Himself had submitted, He evidently inculcated upon His followers, and also ministered unto them by the agency of His disciples."

"That is now very clear," remarked Mr. Thorpe.

Baptism Follows Discipleship. "Yes," I continued, "but I want you to notice particularly, that, according to these verses, Christ made persons disciples before He baptized them. He did not make them His disciples by the act of baptizing them; nor did He first baptize them, and afterwards urge them to become His disciples. He preached the gospel to them, and when they had become His disciples, by accepting Him as the Messiah, then He baptized them on the profession of their faith."

"In His Steps." "The fact that our blessed Lord Himself was baptized," responded Mr. Thorpe, "is certainly a most powerful argument on your side; and if your interpretation be correct, it is clear that the baptisms alluded to in John

iv. 1, 2, were performed under the immediate sanction of Christ, and that they were not cases of infant-baptism, but of persons who were professing disciples."

"Quite so," I answered. "But, coming back again to Christ's baptism, it is important to remember that when He came up out of the river Jordan, His baptism received a remarkable sign of divine approval. The glory of the opened heavens, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the wondrous voice proclaiming His divine Sonship—all testified that His baptism was well-pleasing to the Father."—Matt. iii. 16, 17.

"All this is most impressive," said Mr. Thorpe.

Baptism "Yes," I replied; "and I would remind
sanctioned you that the baptism of our Lord is the only
by the occasion in His life on which we read of the
Blessed Trinity. presence of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Surely, in His obedient submission, as the Son of God; in the approbation of the Father; and in the visible presence of the Holy Spirit, we may see the importance of that solemn rite of baptism, in which our Lord identified Himself with His followers in all ages, when He said, 'Thus it becometh *us* to fulfil all righteousness.'"—Matt. iii. 15.

Strange I may here say that many friends have
Questions. asked me such questions as the following:—
"Why *need* I to be baptized *again*? When I was baptized in infancy, was not that sufficient?"

To all such questions the answer is that, "Our Lord Himself had no personal need of baptism; yet, as our Exemplar, He was baptized at the age of thirty years. Our christening, in babyhood, did not fulfil the conditions of baptism. It was not our own act and deed. Christ, therefore, requires us to be buried with Him in baptism in the exercise of voluntary and personal consecration and faith. Further, as He is our King, He claims loyal and complete obedience; and true love will never ask, How little will He accept? but, What doth He demand? and How much can we render to Him Who has given Himself for us?"—Gal. i. 4.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LORD JESUS AND THE CHILDREN.

Christ Blessing the Children. At our next interview, Mr. Thorpe said, "There is one thing which I have always regarded as a probable testimony in favour of infant-baptism, namely, the fact that Christ blessed little children. May I ask how you deal with this point?"

"The answer is not difficult to find," I replied; "and, in my judgment, the incident to which you refer tells quite in the opposite direction, and indicates that neither Christ nor His disciples practised infant-baptism. For observe:—

Why they were Brought. 1. "Why these children were brought to Christ. It was not that He should baptize them; but, as we are distinctly told, 'that He should lay His hands on them, and pray'—as was the custom of the Rabbis. —Matt. xix. 13.

The Perplexity of the Twelve. 2. "Although it was not the custom of Christ personally to minister the rite of baptism; yet he evidently authorised His disciples to do so. But when these little children were brought to Him, the disciples 'rebuked' those who brought them. Had they been accustomed to baptize infants, they would surely have welcomed these babes, and have gladly baptized them. Instead of rebuking the parents who reverently sought the blessing of Jesus on their offspring, they would have commended their loving solicitude."

Their Mistake. "How do you explain the unsympathetic conduct of the disciples?" asked Mr. Thorpe.

"There seems to be but one explanation," I replied; "and it is that of an eminent Infant-Baptist—

DR. DAVID BROWN:—The disciples thought the intrusion a useless one, since infants were not capable of receiving anything from Him. His ministrations were for grown people.—*Commentary on Luke xviii. 15—17.*

How it Originated. "But how was it," asked Mr. Thorpe, "that the disciples could have conceived this erroneous idea?"

"Ah! you are coming near to the heart of the subject now," I replied. "The fact that they held this erroneous and harsh idea, seems to prove conclusively that the innumerable baptisms which they had hitherto ministered, were baptisms of professing disciples only. Hence, they were perplexed and bewildered when the children were brought to Christ; for they did not know what to do with them. They had no religious ceremony for them; and they appear to have had no directions concerning them. Evidently, they knew nothing of infant-baptism."

The Children were Blessed but not Baptized. 3. "Our Lord was 'moved with indignation' against His disciples; but He did not command that the children should be baptized. Nay, on the contrary, we are expressly told that 'He took them in His arms, and blessed them, laying His hands upon them.'"—Mark x. 16.

"Of such is the Kingdom of God." "But," interrupted Mr. Thorpe, "did not Christ say, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me; forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God?'"—Mark x. 14.

What this means. "He did," I replied; "and in those gracious words, He is ever teaching His followers to cherish towards God that childlike spirit which obedient children manifest towards their parents, namely, the humble and trustful spirit. He does not mean that children are naturally born into His kingdom, or that His Church is composed of children, but only of such as possess a childlike spirit. He does not say 'of *them* is the kingdom,' but 'of *such*'—of those that are *like* them. Hence, both in St. Mark and St. Luke, He adds, 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.'—Mark x. 15: Luke xviii. 17.

If Infants be Baptized, why deny them the Lord's Supper? "Thus you perceive that while Christ blessed the little children, He said nothing about the baptismal font; and if His blessing of these infants may be reasonably adduced in advocacy of infant-baptism, it may, with equal propriety, be pleaded in favour of dispensing to them the Lord's Supper. If unconscious babes are

capable of receiving baptismal blessing, why should they be thought incapable of enjoying the benefits of the Holy Communion?

"But, while all parties agree in rejoicing that infants can receive blessing, you can furnish no evidence that they are capable of baptismal blessing; and it is a most impressive consideration that when infants were brought to the Saviour, in order that He might bestow upon them His benediction, He blessed them, but did not baptize them."

Had these Children been already Baptized? "I am afraid," said Mr. Thorpe, sadly, "that I must abandon this text, and admit that its testimony does not support infant-baptism, but rather tells against it. Christ blessed these children, but evidently did not have them baptized. But may it not be that they had been baptized previously?"

"There is not a scintilla of evidence to that effect," I answered. "As an argument, the idea is valueless. It is mere supposition—a conjecture of despair. Neither in the New Testament, nor in any contemporary Jewish literature whatever, can there be discovered the slightest trace of infant-baptism."

"If these children had been previously baptized, their baptism had given them no favour with the disciples; and no rite or ceremony was needed to secure our Lord's deep, tender, and loving interest in them."

Or, did Christ Refuse them Baptism? "I have one more argument as regards this text," said Mr. Thorpe; "and I hope you will pardon my pertinacity. Is it possible that the reason why Christ did not command that these infants should be baptized, was because their parents had not submitted to that sacred rite?"

"Pardon your pertinacity!" I replied; "I admire it. But how do you know that the parents of these infants had not been baptized? For anything we are told to the contrary, they may have received both John's baptism and Christ's baptism. But, supposing that infant-baptism had then been in existence, can we imagine that our loving

Saviour would have refused His baptismal grace to these little ones, merely on account of the supposed unbaptized condition of their parents; especially at the time when those parents had brought them to Him for the very purpose of securing His blessing?

“If baptism would have initiated these infants into the covenant of grace, or into the Church of Christ, or indeed into any possible spiritual blessing whatsoever, it is inconceivable, under the circumstances, that our Lord would have refrained from commanding His disciples to baptize them. I think, therefore, my friend, you will perceive that the incident of Christ’s blessing these little children, tells decidedly against infant-baptism at every point.”

Baptism I may here add that in considering as to
not the whether infants should be baptized, I do not
Channel of question either their need of divine grace,
Salvation. as spiritual beings, or the possibility that such grace may be bestowed upon them by the Spirit of God. The point in dispute is this—Does the New Testament teach, in any manner, that infants ought to be baptized?

In spite of their unconsciousness, they may, evidently, have spiritual grace bestowed upon them.—Luke i. 15. And all who die in infancy, have granted to them, I doubt not, whatever may be needful for their salvation. But, surely, the sprinkling of a few drops of water upon them, for which there is no scriptural warrant, cannot produce, or help, this act of Omnipotence; nor could the omission prevent or retard it.

But, although infants may have grace given to them, they are not capable of Christian faith, inasmuch as faith is an act of consciousness. And if Christian baptism is a personal profession of faith, how can unconscious infants be regarded as its proper subjects? To say that “they promise repentance and faith by their sureties,” is an ecclesiastical fiction which gives an appearance of unreality to the ceremony, and is also the cause of many serious evils. How can unconscious babes “promise repentance and faith?”

CHAPTER XII.

NOT INFANT-BAPTISM, BUT INFANT-DEDICATION.

"WELL, I must admit," said Mr. Thorpe, "that you have met my objections fully and fairly."

What Christ Taught in blessing the Children. "It is pleasant to me to hear you say so," I answered; "and I should like to draw your attention to what appears to be the great lesson which is taught by our Saviour in His gracious act of blessing little children."

"I shall be glad to listen to your remarks," said Mr. Thorpe. "You have convinced me that Christ did not have these children baptized; also that the fact of His blessing them without baptizing them, tells against infant-baptism, instead of in its favour. But I cannot help feeling that this tender incident has some message for His followers at the present time. What that message is, it seems to me, many of us have yet to learn."

"You are quite right," I answered. "False teaching, custom, and prejudice, have combined to pervert the simple teaching of this passage, and to rob one of the tenderest actions of our Lord of its sweetness and beauty. You will observe that the children which were brought to Jesus, are spoken of by St. Luke as 'babes'—*βρέφη*,—and by St. Matthew and St. Mark as 'little children'—*παιδιά*. And our Saviour seems to teach that the babes are to be brought unto Him with parental supplication and dedication; and that the little children are to be encouraged to come unto Him in prayer and faith. The babes cannot be brought too early: the little children cannot come too soon.

Infants are Dear to Christ. "Infants need no sprinkled water or mystic ceremony, to quench the supposed flames of 'the wrath of God' against them, or to commend them to His boundless compassion. They are born under the canopy of infinite grace in Christ Jesus; are dear to the

Saviour's tender heart; and He longs to embrace them in His arms of love, as He bestows upon them His blessing.

Should be "To Jesus, therefore, Christian parents
Dedicated, not should bring their treasures of infant-life,
Baptized. in grateful prayer and solemn dedication.
 For Him they should train their dear children; and when, having arrived at years of discretion, they give evidence of personal faith in Christ, they should then be urged to confess Him in His appointed way, by being 'buried with Him in baptism.'"—Col. ii. 12.

"I am glad," said Mr. Thorpe, "to hear what you say about the dedication of infants to their Lord; for although I do not yet share all your views on baptism, it seems to me that the gracious act of the Saviour in blessing the children, points naturally to a service of dedication; also, that such a service would be entirely free from the danger of becoming superstitious; and that it would bring untold blessings both upon parents and children. It further appears to me that one of the strongest reasons why infant-baptism is so prevalent, and often so superstitious, is that parents feel they must do something of a religious nature for their children."

"Quite so," I replied. "Evangelical ministers should recognise parental instincts in this matter, and should provide in their churches an impressive and scriptural service for the dedication of infants. This would, in my opinion, do more than almost anything else to lead to the discontinuance of infant-baptism, which, although a perversion of Christian baptism, has largely displaced that divine ordinance which was instituted by the supreme Head of the Church."

A Brotherly On this point, it gives me great pleasure
Testimony. to quote some generous and weighty words from the pen of one well-qualified to express an opinion. They were written as a Preface to my Form of Service for the Dedication of Infants.

REV. F. B. MEYER:—My friend, the Rev. J. Mountain, asks me to write a few commendatory words of his Form of Service for the Dedication of Infants and Little Children. I do so with great pleasure; not that I think it needs them, but because it

gives me an opportunity of saying how seemly and right it appears to me, that those of us who are unable to baptize infants should adopt some method of recognising and manifesting the relationship of the Church towards the children of her members.

We cannot consider them as members of the Church until they give evidence that they have been truly regenerated of the Holy Ghost. At the same time, the Church has no right to be indifferent to the children of her members till that blessed change has taken place. She cannot forget that, in a deep sense, they are "holy"—1 Cor. vii. 14; not in the sense of personal character, but of privilege and opportunity.

It is, therefore, the province of the Church to care for them; to join with their parents in gladness for their birth, and in gratitude to the Giver of Life; to unite in supplication for the early operation of the grace of God on the young heart; and to enforce the duty of training children, from the earliest dawn of thought, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Those who practise believers'-baptism have been so anxious to avoid any complicity with the rite of infant-baptism, that they have, perhaps, erred in the other extreme, and have not done enough to recognise and welcome young life. There is no need for this. The best policy for showing men what we deem to be error, is to offer them something truer and better. In many cases, however, a change is coming in the direction indicated by Mr. Mountain's little manual. Those who most strenuously resist the practice of infant-baptism, because of the great evils with which it is associated, are adopting some form of Dedication Service; and for such, my friend's Form of Service will be a most useful model and directory.

It is not requisite that the whole Service be used; though it would be difficult to indicate any portion that could be omitted without doing violence to the symmetry and beauty of the conception. In any case, it will suggest an order and decorousness in the welcome which the Church gives to the children of her members, which will afford all that most godly parents really desire in the baptismal service from which we dissent.

The use of water is now regarded by many who practise infant-baptism as immaterial. The idea of baptismal regeneration is rigorously denied. What is really wanted is the united prayer, welcome, and recognition on the part of God's people. These conditions are met in Mr. Mountain's manual, which I both use and commend.

A Dedication Service Desirable.	If pastors were to provide for their flocks a suitable service for infant-dedication, it would, I doubt not, be gladly welcomed and extensively used: and superstition and sacer-
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dotalism, with which, alas! infant-baptism has for many centuries been so largely associated, would thereby receive such a blow as it has not experienced since the days of the Reformation.

Baptism to Follow Christian baptism would then take its proper place in the evangelical churches, as **Personal Faith.** the solemn, public profession of personal repentance and personal faith: and as those who had been dedicated to our Lord grew up from infancy to years of discretion, they would be urged to yield themselves to Him in loyal, loving service, and, when they had done so, to follow Him obediently and spiritually in the ordinance of believers' baptism.

An Appeal to Parents. The following appeal has recently been written, at my request, by one who for nearly forty years was a prominent Evangelical clergyman of the Church of England:—

REV. CHARLES STIRLING, M.A. :—A person is not more likely to become a true Christian on account of having been baptized in infancy. Multitudes whose parents have not presented them for infant-baptism, but who have received a Christian training, have, in early life, yielded themselves to the Lord, and have become most devoted and eminent Christians. Yea, indeed, it would appear that in many instances, infant-baptism has proved a great hindrance to personal decision for Christ. For, in these cases, people have been led to suppose that they were regenerated when baptized; and, hence, they have trusted in their baptism, instead of coming to Christ for salvation by faith.

Dedicate your little ones to Christ; tell them of His love; and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. If they should die before arriving at the age of responsibility, you need not doubt that, through divine grace, they have gone to be "with Christ, which is very far better." But should they be spared to give evidence of a change of heart; urge them, even in early life, to make public confession of their faith, in the ordinance of believers' baptism, and openly to "put on Christ." Such a testimony would, in these days, be valuable indeed.

CHAPTER XIII.

IS INFANT-BAPTISM FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

A Striking Text. THE question of baptism was unexpectedly brought up one Wednesday evening in my Teachers' Bible Class. The chapter appointed for our study was the one which narrates that Philip went down to Samaria to preach the gospel; and that when some of the people believed the good tidings of salvation "they were baptized, both men and women."—Acts viii. 12.

A Pointed Question. During the course of the lesson, one of the teachers was evidently impressed with the fact that while the inspired record informs us that believing "men and women" were baptized, it makes no mention of infants. He therefore asked, "What do you think, sir, about infant-baptism?"

"What I think, or, indeed, what any other minister may think about infant-baptism, is of very little importance," I replied. "The question is, What did the inspired writers of the New Testament think? No church, however ancient; no council, however representative; no synod, however influential; no custom or usage, however venerable—may over-ride the teaching and practice of Jesus Christ and His apostles, as recorded upon its sacred pages. What saith the Scriptures?—must be our enquiry. And by their answer, all theories and practices concerning baptism must stand or fall."

The Decisive Authority. "Quite so," answered the senior member of the class. "As baptism is a Christian ordinance, surely the New Testament must be viewed as the only decisive and sufficient authority regarding it."

"That being so," I replied, "I will ask you to settle the matter for yourselves; and this you can easily do. Between now and our next meeting, I should like each one of you to take a large sheet of paper, and write upon it a list of all the books of the New Testament. Then, opposite the title of

44 Is Infant-Baptism found in the New Testament?

each book, write any proofs of infant-baptism which you think that particular book contains."

"Nothing could be simpler or fairer," said the senior teacher; "and I, for one, will gladly do as you wish."

As each one promised to comply with my request, it will not be wondered at that I looked forward with eagerness to the following Wednesday's meeting.

When the Class had assembled, the teachers placed their productions in my hands; and as I read out the various papers, each member evinced the deepest interest; for although the papers differed in form, the substantial result was soon tabulated as follows:—

INFANT-BAPTISM WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES OF SCRIPTURE.

Name of Book.	Commands for Infant- Baptism.	Instances of Infant- Baptism.	Allusions to church, position of baptized infants and to the manner of their sub- sequent admission as full members.
St. Matthew	None	None	None.
St. Mark.....	None	None	None.
St. Luke.....	None	None	None.
St. John.....	None	None	None.
Acts.....	None	None	None.
Romans	None	None	None.
1 Corinthians ...	None	None	None.
2 Corinthians.....	None	None	None.
Galatians	None	None	None.
Ephesians	None	None	None.
Philippians.....	None	None	None.
Colossians	None	None	None.
1 Thessalonians...	None	None	None.
2 Thessalonians...	None	None	None.
1 Timothy	None	None	None.
2 Timothy	None	None	None.
Titus	None	None	None.
Philemon	None	None	None.
Hebrews.....	None	None	None.
James	None	None	None.
1 Peter	None	None	None.
2 Peter	None	None	None.
1 John.....	None	None	None.
2 John	None	None	None.
3 John	None	None	None.
Jude.....	None	None	None.
Revelation	None	None	None.

My Class When I had finished the reading of the **Astonished.** above, one of the teachers exclaimed, "Well, I never! I have always thought that infant-baptism was to be found somewhere in the New Testament; but now that we have definitely searched for it, we have all failed to find it."

"Yes," I answered, "and the reason why you have failed to find it, is because it is not there. But you will cease to be surprised when you learn that some of the most eminent divines in all sections of the Church have acknowledged that infant-baptism is not to be found in the New Testament."

TESTIMONIES OF CHURCH OF ENGLAND DIVINES.

Bishop HAROLD BROWNE:—We read nothing of infants being baptized by any of the apostles.—*Exposition of xxxix. Articles, p. 673.*

Bishop BURNET:—There is no express precept or rule given in the New Testament for the baptism of infants.—*Exposition of xxxix. Articles. Art. xxvii.*

Bishop BARLOW, of Lincoln:—I believe, and know, that there is neither precept nor example in Scripture for infant-baptism, nor any just evidence of it for above two hundred years after Christ.—*Letter to Mr. Tombes.*

Rev. E. A. LITTON, M.A., Rector of Naunton:—On the whole it is consistent with the historical evidence, and with the nature of things, that infant-baptism is of ecclesiastical, and not of apostolic origin, growing up gradually in the Church, and justifiable on its own grounds.—*Introduction to Dogmatic Theology, vol. ii. p. 246.*

Dean STANLEY:—In the apostolic age, and in the three centuries which followed, it is evident that, as a general rule, those who came to baptism came in full age, and of their own deliberate choice. We find a few cases of the baptism of children. In the third century we find *one* case of the baptism of *infants*.—*Contemporary Review, 1879, p. 699.*

DEAN GOODE:—It must be carefully remembered that as the doctrine of infant-baptism is deduced inferentially, and by analogical reasoning, from statements of Scripture applying more expressly to the case of adult-baptism, so the doctrine of the effects of infant-baptism can be obtained only in the same way.—*Effects of Infant-Baptism, p. 9.*

Rev. H. R. HAWES, M.A.:—I have shewn that the Early Christians baptized people, not to give them the Spirit, but because they had the Spirit; and until some signs of conversion, that is, some signs of the action of God's Spirit in the heart, as far as I can see, people in the early times were not baptized; although, for aught I know, infant-baptism may have been early practised. *Speech in Season*, p. 171.

Rev. Dr. JACOB:—Notwithstanding all that has been written by learned men upon this subject, it remains indisputable that infant-baptism is not mentioned in the New Testament. . . . It ought to be distinctly acknowledged that *it is not an apostolic ordinance*. Like modern episcopacy, it is an ecclesiastical institution. . . . There is no trace of it until the last part of the second century, when a passage is found in Irenæus, which may possibly, and only possibly, refer to it.—*Ecclesiastical Polity*, p. 272.

Bishop HANDLEY MOULE:—In the New Testament we have not indeed any mention of infant-baptism. . . . It is true that few certain notices of infant-baptism are to be found before century iii., and that Tertullian seems to deprecate it (*de Bapt. o. 19*). . . . Observe the very temperate language of Article xxvii. on the subject. And infant-baptism is not in such a sense "of faith," that the Christian who reverently declines its use for his children is therefore heretical.—*Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 256, 257.

Dr. A. PLUMMER, Master of University College, Durham:—The recipients of Christian-baptism were required to repent and believe. Not only is there no mention of the baptism of infants, but there is no text from which such baptism can be securely inferred. Scripture tells us that repentance and faith are requisite for baptism. Assuming that infants have no need of repentance, can we assume that faith also may be dispensed with? . . . It is probable that all that is said in Scripture about baptism, refers to the baptism of adults who are qualified by repentance and faith.—*Hastings' Bible Dictionary*, Article on *Baptism*.

Professor W. SANDAY, D.D.:—Baptism was the mark of admission to membership in the Messianic kingdom. Baptism and faith went together. . . . At the time when St. Paul wrote, it in most cases accompanied conversion. It meant the giving up of heathen or Jewish practices, repentance for past sins, and a more or less complete change of life. It meant, besides, an admission to the Messianic privileges and immunities, including more especially the righteousness which was to be the characteristic of the children of the kingdom. This putting off of the old, and putting on of the new, was symbolised by the immersion in water.—*Epistle to the Romans* (Excursus) in *Ellicott's New Testament Commentary for English Readers*.

My Class Astounded. As I read out some of these opinions of well-known divines, the members of the Class seemed utterly astounded; and when I had concluded, the senior teacher said:—

“It seems almost incredible, sir, that eminent Church of England divines who practised and defended infant-baptism could make such admissions as those you have just read to us.”

“Quite so,” I replied; “but I can quote other testimonies, equally strong, from other eminent Infant-Baptist divines.”

TESTIMONIES OF LUTHERAN DIVINES.

Professor OLSHAUSEN:—By the introduction of infant-baptism, which was certainly not apostolic, the relative position of baptism . . . was changed.—*Works*, vol. ii. p. 454.

Professor SCHLEIERMACHER:—All traces of infant-baptism which one will find in the New Testament, must first be put into it.—*Christian Faith*, vol. ii. p. 283.

Professor GESENIUS, being informed that many in America reject infant-baptism, and baptize only on a profession of faith, replied:—That is perfectly right; that is according to the Bible.—*Christian Review*, vol. iii. p. 201.

Professor L. LANGE, of Jena:—All attempts to make out infant-baptism from the New Testament fail. It is totally opposed to the spirit of the apostolic age, and to the fundamental principles of the New Testament.—*Infant-Baptism*, p. 101.

Professor NEANDER:—Baptism, at first, was administered only to adults; as men were accustomed to conceive baptism and faith as strictly connected. There does not appear to be any reason for deriving infant-baptism from an apostolic institution.—*Church History*, vol. i. p. 430.

Professor MEYER:—The baptism of children is not to be considered as an apostolic institution; but arose gradually in the post-apostolic age, after early and long-continued resistance, in connection with certain views of doctrine, and did not become general in the Church till after the time of Augustine. The defence of infant-baptism transcends the domain of exegesis, and must be given up to that of dogmatics.—*Comment on Acts xvi. 15*.

“Why, sir,” interrupted the senior teacher, “these testimonies of Lutheran divines are quite as strong as those you gave us from the Church of England.”

"They are," I answered; "and I would ask you to bear in mind that these celebrated Professors, whose testimonies I have given to you, are universally esteemed both for their learning and their piety. The great Lutheran Church, to which they all belonged, has always practised infant-baptism; but, notwithstanding, these eminent scholars felt compelled, as the result of their honest and independent investigations, fearlessly to express the opinions which I have read to you. But I will now give some further evidence furnished by prominent Infant-Baptists, and all to the same effect.

I then read to the class several of the following:—

TESTIMONIES OF PRESBYTERIAN, METHODIST, CONGREGATIONAL
AND OTHER DIVINES.

Professor AGAR BEET, D.D.:—It must be at once admitted that the New Testament contains no clear proof that infants were baptized in the days of the apostles.—*Christian Baptism*, p. 28.

Rev. E. DE PRESSENSÉ, D.D., French Theologian and Senator:—Christian-baptism is not to be received any more than faith, by right of inheritance. . . . This is the great reason why we cannot believe that it was administered in the apostolic age to little children.—*The Apostolic Age*, pp. 374-6.

Principal JOHN CUNNINGHAM, D.D.:—Infant-baptism is never heard of during the first 150 years of the Church's history. It was the exception for at least two centuries more. It was a startling departure from the original institution.—*Croall Lectures*, p. 186.

Rev. HENRY WARD BEECHER:—I concede, and I assert, that infant-baptism is nowhere commanded in the New Testament. No man can find a passage that commands it; and if it can stand only on that ground, we may as well give it up first as last.—*Sermon on Mark x. 13-16*.

Professor JAMES S. CANDLISH, D.D.:—There is peculiar difficulty in explaining the efficacy of baptism in the case of infants; and the scriptural requirement of faith for the right and profitable reception of the sacrament is the strongest objection against the practice of infant-baptism.—*Christian Sacraments*, p. 72.

Dr. JOHN WATSON, better known as "Ian Maclaren":—Unto him who believeth, the water of baptism is both the sign and seal of regeneration; but to him who believeth not, it is only a reproach, representing that blood of Christ which is not cleansing him, that union to the Lord whom he is refusing.—*The Doctrines of Grace*, p. 343.

Professor W. F. SLATER, M.A., of Didsbury College:—All that is said of baptism in the New Testament, or in the writers of the first century, implies that the subjects who realised the benefits of salvation in connection with it were those who had intelligence to comply with its conditions.—*Faith and Life of the Early Church*, p. 285.

Rev. O. ANDERSON-SCOTT, M.A.:—Whether or not infants were baptized in the period covered by the New Testament, it is certain that the apostles, in their references to baptism, were guided by the normal case of adult-baptism, in which those who were “baptized into Christ” had first confessed Him as Lord, repenting of their sins.—*Evangelical Doctrine—Bible Truth*, p. 89.

Dr. DODDRIDGE.—The law of Christ requires that all who believe the gospel should be baptized, that is, should be separated from unbelievers, and joined to the visible Christian church, by being solemnly washed with water; which washing is, on the one hand, to signify their faith in Christ and resolution of holy obedience; and, on the other, to confirm their faith in the gospel promises of pardon, sanctification, and eternal life.—*Lectures on Pneumatology, Ethics, and Divinity, Lecture 200*.

Rev. C. O. ELDRIDGE, B.A.:—In the first days of Christianity, the subjects of baptism were adult converts from Judaism and heathenism. To such, as on the day of Pentecost, baptism was an open confession of their faith in Christ. To many of them, doubtless, it was also the time when, and the ordinance wherein, they trusted in Jesus, and found redemption and forgiveness of sins through His blood. Thus baptism came to be regarded as the means whereby sin was washed away, and regeneration effected.—*A Popular Exposition of Methodist Theology*, pp. 159, 160.

Principal P. T. FORSYTH, D.D.:—I do not believe it possible to prove the practice of infant-baptism from the New Testament. That was a great step. Neither do I think it obtained during the first two centuries after Christ. I believe the principle and practice of infant-baptism was hastened by considerations which will not bear very close looking into. A superstitious belief grew up that baptism was almost absolutely necessary to salvation; and hence parents wished their children baptized as early as possible. Origen, too, had a queer, dreamy notion about a pre-existent life, and he thought baptism washed away the sins contained in that previous existence.—*Address at Oadby, quoted in “The Christian World,” June 13th, 1890*.

When I had proceeded thus far, the superintendent said: “It seems to me, sir, to be an astonishing thing that eminent divines should practise or defend infant-baptism, in spite of their admission that it is not to be found in

the New Testament. How do you account for their inconsistency?"

The Sphere of Inference. "I cannot account for it in individual cases," I answered; "but, speaking generally, they all rely upon inference, and are quite honest, though not justified, in so doing. Now, I do not depreciate the utility of inference, in matters on which God has not clearly revealed His will, and when inference must necessarily be resorted to in determining Christian duty. But I contend that on the subject of infant-baptism, the New Testament is sufficiently clear; and that the inferences so long relied upon, are not only out of harmony with its divine teachings, but also, in some cases, with each other. I contend, further, that as Christian-baptism is a positive ordinance, it required a positive command to make it obligatory. But no command can be produced from Holy Scripture for infant-baptism, which fact, in itself, is sufficient to shew that it is not a divine ordinance, but a mere ecclesiastical institution."

"Would you kindly mention some of these inferences?" asked the senior teacher.

The Infant-Baptist Medley. "Certainly," I replied. "For instance, some infer the baptism of infants from so-called proselyte-baptism; others from heredity and the Abrahamic covenant; some from circumcision; others from the figurative baptism of the Israelites unto Moses; some from Christ blessing little children; others from the great Commission; some from the baptism of households; others from the relationship and influence of Christian parents; some from the idea that infants are 'born in original sin, and in the wrath of God'; and others from the idea that they are born in spotless purity. Some infer the baptism of all infants; while others infer the baptism of the infants of believing parents only. Some infer that baptism admits infants into the visible Church; others that it admits them into the invisible Church; some that it regenerates them; and others that it only dedicates them. Such is a fair description of the medley resulting from the exercise of inference in regard to this question. How

different from the clear and definite convictions arising when we allow the matter to be settled by the New Testament alone!"

The Silence of Scripture Condemns Infant-Baptism. "It seems to me," interrupted the superintendent, "that if infant-baptism had been practised by our Lord and His apostles, we should have found somewhere in the New Testament at least one command, direction, exhortation, or example to shew its existence, to point out its effects, and to inculcate its observance; but as all the twenty-six books of the New Testament are as silent as the grave upon the subject, the conclusion seems to me to be absolutely incontrovertible, namely, that infant-baptism was entirely unknown to Christ and His apostles."

The Church's Substitute for Christ's Ordinance. "Yes," I added; "and you may carry the case further. If believers' immersion was the only baptism known to Christ and His apostles, how lamentable it is that so large a portion of the Church should have displaced and rejected that divinely-appointed ordinance, with its sacred associations and spiritual teachings; and should have substituted for it, by their own invention, or by introduction from heathen rites, the ceremony of the sprinkling of unconscious babes, with all its attendant superstitions and evils! It seems to me that in so doing, the Church has usurped, however unconsciously, the authority and supremacy of Christ!"

What Unity Demands. I may add here that, if infant-baptism was unnecessary in the apostolic age, it cannot be necessary now. The urgent need, therefore, for Christian unity demands its rejection.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PLEAS OF HOUSEHOLD-BAPTISM CONSIDERED.

A Two days after the meeting of the Teachers' Letter of Bible Class, as recorded in the preceding Enquiry. chapter, I was surprised and cheered by receiving the following letter:—

DEAR PASTOR,

We are now deeply interested in the subject of baptism, and we thank you very much for your earnest efforts to teach us the truth concerning it.

At the last meeting of the Class we were led to see that the New Testament nowhere commands infant-baptism, nor records an instance of an infant being baptized.

But is it not stated in the Acts that the apostles baptized whole households? And may there not have been infants in some of those households?

We hope, sir, that you will pardon our writing to you; but we should be glad if you would favour us by explaining these household-baptisms, at the next meeting of the Class.

We remain, dear Pastor,

Sincerely yours,

JOHN TRUMAN.

WILLIAM PAGETT.

HENRY HOWARD.

Accordingly, when the teachers met on the following Wednesday evening, I read to them the above letter, and said that it would give me great pleasure to reply to it.

An “We are all much obliged to you,” said **Unwarrantable** the superintendent, “and I, for one, am **Assumption.** deeply interested in this part of the question. Several of my friends, indeed, have lately said to me that as we read in the Acts of the Apostles of the baptism of several households, it is reasonable to assume that in some of these households there were infants, and that those infants were baptized along with their parents.”

Households “In my judgment,” I replied, “the often without assumption is unwarrantable, for—

Infants. 1. “The word ‘household’ does not necessarily imply the presence of infants at all. There are many households which consist only of husbands and their wives. There are also great numbers of households which include only husbands, wives, and servants. There are, moreover, multitudes of households in which all the sons and daughters are grown up. To assume, therefore, in the cases of household-baptism recorded in the Scriptures, that there *must* have been infants, is to beg the whole question in dispute.

“In the very first instance in the Bible where the word ‘household’ is mentioned, children are apparently excepted, and are referred to as separate from the ‘household.’—Gen. xviii. 19.

Infants 2. “But, supposing that some of these
Tacitly households did contain infants, it would not
Excluded. necessarily follow that they were baptized. For it is a universal principle, that when a number of people are said to do, or receive, an action which can be done, or received, by intelligent and responsible persons only, in all such cases infants are tacitly excluded.

“For instance, when we speak of a day of national humiliation or thanksgiving, we do not think of including unconscious babes in the observance of such a day. And why? Because their infancy renders them incapable of participating in that observance.

“Again, when a gentleman told me some time ago, that all his household were rejoicing because his eldest son had passed a brilliant examination at his University, I knew, of course, that he did not intend to include in the rejoicing his twin babies who, at the time, were lying in their cradles.

“Further, let us suppose that a Parliamentary election had taken place; and that the father of a family, speaking of the election, were to say—‘I, and all my household,

voted on the side of'—such and such a candidate. What should we understand him to mean? Surely not that the infants of his family—if he had any—exercised the franchise; but only that every member of the household who possessed a vote, and who was able to record it, had voted. So, when we read that a whole household was baptized, it does not follow that the household contained infants, or, if it did, that they were baptized; but only that baptism was administered to those in the household who were of an age to possess the spiritual qualifications for baptism—namely, repentance and faith."

A Worthless Objection. 3. "But, sir," interrupted the superintendent, "do not Infant-Baptists say that there is an important distinction in the usage of the Greek words which are severally translated 'house,' and 'household'; and that when the word for 'house' is employed, as is invariably the case in these Scripture household-baptisms, it specially indicates the presence of children; while the word for 'household' has a larger significance, and specially refers to relatives, servants, and dependents?"

"I am glad you have mentioned this objection," I replied; "but, as a matter of fact, it has no validity whatever. The word *οἶκος*, *house*, and the word *οἰκία*, *household*, are frequently used interchangeably in the Holy Scriptures; as, for instance, in 1 Cor. i. 16 and 1 Cor. xvi. 15; Matt. x. 13 and Luke x. 5; Luke viii. 41 and 51; Matt. xxiv. 43 and Luke xii. 39. Indeed, St. Luke uses both words in the same verse and in the same sense.—Luke x. 5. Hence, you will perceive that the words for 'house' and 'household' have practically the same meaning, and that there is no more difference between them than that which obtains between such terms as *brothers* and *brethren*. Therefore, as an argument for the inclusion of infants in the household-baptisms, the objection is evidently worthless."

Were Household-Baptisms General? 4. "But is it not possible," asked one of the teachers, "that the apostles practised household-baptism as a general principle, and, therefore, in all probability, baptized many households on the faith of the family-head?"

"There is no scriptural evidence," I replied, "for saying that the apostles and their assistants baptized more households than the five specifically mentioned; nor for the inference that it was their custom to baptize households, as such, without regard to the personal faith of their individual members.

Not 5. "Moreover, if the apostles, wherever
Family-Headship they went, had systematically baptized
but households, solely on the faith of the
Personal Faith. head of the family, then they would have had to baptize not only the unconscious babes, but also the unregenerate adults, of such households. Thus, they would have deluged the spirituality of the Church, by pouring into its bosom the tide of unrepented heathenism!"

Professor A. O. KENDRICK :—On the supposition that households were to be baptized by the apostles solely on the faith of their family-head, the Professor says :—A wife fresh from a sacrifice to Juno; daughters who had just been rendering their vows to Venus; sons whose hands were reeking with offerings to Mars; servants who daily invoked Mercury, the patron god of thieves—these and such like, would have to be baptized because of the faith and piety of the head of their family!—*Christian Review*, 1863, p. 288.

"Surely, the apostles of our Lord could never have ministered baptism upon such a basis as that suggested. When we read of whole households being baptized, the inevitable inference must be that the inspired penman is referring only to the professing believers that comprise, or are included in, the household.

Salvation 6. "It is, doubtless, a great privilege and
not opportunity to have a godly parentage;
Hereditary. but grace is not transmitted by parents to their children. The New Testament knows nothing of sponsorship, of believing by proxy, or of hereditary salvation. The very idea is emphatically impugned both by John the Baptist and by our blessed Lord. Personal responsibility, personal repentance, personal faith, and personal obedience, are the key-notes of all the recorded testimonies of the apostolic heralds of the Cross.—Matt. iii. 7—10; John viii. 39—44; Acts ii. 38: iii. 19: xvii. 30: xxvi. 20."

"So far as you have gone," broke in the senior teacher, "I think we are all in agreement with you."

"I am pleased to hear it," I responded. "But it is no more than I might have expected; for some of the ablest Infant-Baptists have admitted that these household-baptisms furnish no help to their cause."

At this point the superintendent said, "If you have no objection, we should like to hear your explanation of the five cases of household-baptism recorded in the Acts of the Apostles."

"We will consider these cases at our next meeting," I replied; "and I think you will then agree with me that not one of them can be legitimately adduced in favour of infant-baptism."

CHAPTER XV.

THE SCRIPTURE-INSTANCES OF HOUSEHOLD-BAPTISM EXAMINED.

WHEN the Teachers' Bible Class assembled on the next Wednesday evening, I commenced the meeting by narrating the following incident:—

A Ministerial Conference. "Some years ago, a number of ministers of various denominations were breakfasting together at the house of a Presbyterian elder. In the course of a conversation on baptism, some of the younger Presbyterian ministers became very emphatic in their assertion that the apostles practised infant-baptism. 'Of course they did,' said one; 'for we read that they baptized five households, and some of those households must have contained infants.'

A Smart Retort. "As the Baptist ministers who were present made no reply, the genial host asked them if they had nothing to say. 'Yes,' answered a venerable Baptist, in a subdued voice, 'I am prepared to assert that every member of those five households was over twenty years of age.'

"This remark was greeted with good-natured laughter; and from several lips there came the question, 'How can you prove it?' 'Oh,' replied the aged Baptist, 'I said nothing about proving; I was simply asserting. Infected by your example, I was just indulging a little in the pleasant occupation of guessing.'

Theological Guesswork. "The young ministers took the rebuke in good part; and as they squirmed in silence, the venerable Baptist proceeded to complete their discomfiture by dryly saying to them, 'I admire your style of argument. It saves such a lot of trouble to take for granted the very point in dispute. I admire also the liveliness of your imagination, which can descry infants where

they were non-existent, and which can invent them where the inspired penman informs us of none. Perhaps you can tell us what was the exact number of infants which these households contained, and what were their names and ages; also how many of them were boys, and how many were girls. Perhaps, indeed, as a special favour, you might go even further, and inform us how many of these infants had suffered from the whooping-cough and the measles. Perhaps also'——

A Noble Confession. “‘Pray, don’t be too hard upon them,’ interrupted a venerable Presbyterian minister, who had hitherto sat in silence. ‘Your innocent banter is very refreshing; and I must say, it is richly deserved. My young ministerial brethren here won’t forget in a hurry the lesson your genial sarcasm has taught them. As for myself, though I still practise infant-baptism, I have long ago given up defending it on any such pretext as that of the apostolic household-baptisms. To infer the baptism of infants from such an uncertain ground, is nothing less than theological guesswork.’”

Infants Excluded from the Baptisms. “We thank you, sir, for that story,” said my superintendent; “but, in my opinion, there is no uncertainty about these household-baptisms; and a much stronger term than ‘theological guesswork’ is needed to describe the unwarrantable inference to which you refer. Since our last meeting, I have carefully studied the subject; and I find that, in nearly every instance of household-baptism recorded in Scripture, there is something stated in the narrative itself which shews that infants could not have been included in the baptisms. Indeed, it would almost seem that, in most of the cases, the inspired penmen had gone out of their way to make it clear that these household-baptisms were baptisms of professing believers.”

“You are quite right,” I replied; “and many eminent Infant-Baptists readily admit that they cannot plead for infant-baptism on the ground of these household-baptisms. I will read to you the testimonies of a few of these.”

Professor AGAR BEET, D.D.:—This mention of baptized households by no means proves, or suggests, that he baptized infants. —*Christian Baptism*, p. 28.

Rev. H. R. HAWEIS, M.A.:—As regards infant-baptism itself, I do not know that we have a single instance of it in the New Testament. We hear of whole households being baptized on their embracing Christianity; and it is inferred that there were some children in the household, perhaps infants. It is *inferred*; that is all.—*Speech in Season*, pp. 165, 166.

Professor JACOBI:—In none of these instances of household-baptism has it been proved that there were little children among them. But even supposing that there were, there was no necessity for excluding them from baptism in plain words, since *such exclusion was understood* as a matter of course.—*Kitto's Cyclopædia*, vol. 1, p. 287.

Rev. HENRY WARD BEECHER:—I affirm that the cases where infant-baptism is implied are by no means conclusive and without doubt; and that if there is no other basis for it than that, it is not safe to found it on the practice of the apostles in the baptism of Christian families. Therefore, I give up that which has been injudiciously used as an argument for infant-baptism.—*Sermons*, p. 202.

Professor NEANDER:—We cannot prove that the apostles ordained infant-baptism from those places where the baptism of a whole family is mentioned, as in Acts xvi. 33; 1 Cor. i. 16. We can draw no such conclusions; because the enquiry is still to be made, whether there were any children in these families of such an age that they were not capable of an intelligent reception of Christianity; for this is the only point on which the case turns.—*Church History*, vol. i. p. 450.

Rev. E. A. LITTON, M.A., Rector of Naunton:—The baptism of households is appealed to; but, unfortunately for the argument, the term “household” is similarly used in passages which can by no possibility be applied to infants; as when the “house of Stephanas”—the very “household” which Paul baptized—is said to have “addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints”—1 Cor. xvi. 15; and the jailor of Philippi, to have believed ‘with all his house.’—Acts xvi. 34.—*Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*, vol. ii. p. 242.

The Household of Cornelius. “We will now,” I resumed, “proceed to examine the household-baptisms one by one; and we will commence with the case of Cornelius.”—Acts x. 44—48; xi. 14.

“It seems to me, sir,” interrupted the senior teacher, “that this case can be dismissed in one sentence. The

household of Cornelius evidently consisted of believers; for we read in the second verse of the chapter that he 'feared God *with all his house*.' Moreover, the inspired writer informs us that 'the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word,' and that they began to 'speak with tongues and magnify God.' Infants could not perform these functions."

The Household of Crispus. "Your remarks are perfectly just," I answered; "so we will at once consider the case of the household of Crispus."—Acts xviii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 14.

"This case is even more striking than the previous one," said the superintendent. "The whole household must have been believers; for we read that 'Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord *with all his house*.'"

The Household of Stephanas. "That being so," I remarked, "we can now proceed to consider the household of Stephanas; and there are two considerations which make it clear that this household also consisted wholly of believers.

1. "They are described as 'the first fruits of Achaia;' that is to say, they were the earliest converts to the Christian faith in that part of Greece. Infants would not have been thus described.—1 Cor. i. 16; xvi. 15, 16.

2. "Moreover, about five years after their baptism, St. Paul wrote concerning them, and said, 'They have set themselves to minister unto the saints.' He also exhorted the Corinthian Christians to 'be in subjection unto such.'"

"Then it follows," said one of the teachers, "that if the household of Stephanas had been infants at the time of their baptism, they would have been only about six years old at the time when they began to 'minister unto the saints,' and when the apostle exhorted the Corinthians to 'be in subjection unto such.' It is conclusive, therefore, that the baptized household of Stephanas contained no infants, and that it consisted wholly of professing believers."

At this stage of the meeting, I read to them the following testimonies of prominent Infant-Baptists—

Dr. MACKNIGHT:—The family of Stephanas seem all to have been adults when they were baptized, for they are said to have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints.—*Comment on 1 Cor. i. 16.*

Professor OLSHAUSEN:—For infant-baptism nothing is to be deduced from the word ‘household.’ The adult members of the family, or the slaves likewise, might be signified by it.—*Comment on 1 Cor. i. 1-17.*

Dr. HAMMOND:—I think it unreasonable that the apostle’s bare mention of baptizing his household should be thought competent to conclude that infants were baptized by him; when it is uncertain whether there were any such at all in his house.—*Works, vol. i. p. 494.*

Professor NEANDER:—We cannot infer the existence of infant-baptism from the instances of the baptism of whole families; for the passage in 1 Cor. xvi. 15, shews the fallacy of such a conclusion; as from that it appears that the whole family of Stephanas, who were baptized by Paul, consisted of adults.—*Hist. of Planting of Christianity, p. 163.*

The “We will now,” I resumed, “consider the
Household of case of Lydia and her household.—Acts xvi.
Lydia. 13—15, 40.

1. “Those who advocate the baptism of infants from the baptizing of the household of Lydia, are obliged to assume that at this time, or shortly before, she had a husband; also that she had one or more infant children; and that those infants were baptized along with herself. But you will see, in a moment, that every one of these assumptions is entirely destitute of scriptural support.

2. “The Scriptures do not inform us that she had any family, or, indeed, whether she was married or not. But as she speaks of her dwelling-house as ‘my house,’ it is evident that she was the head of the household, which would seem to indicate that she was either unmarried or a widow.

3. “We read, further, that she was engaged in business as a seller of purple; and it would have been in perfect accordance with the usage of that period for her to speak of any servants and workpeople whom she may have employed, as ‘her household.’

4. “It is sometimes said that, as the inspired narrative does not state that Lydia’s household were all adults, there-

fore, we are justified in concluding that some of its members were infants. But this inference is unwarrantable, and, in fact, is simply guesswork. Besides, even if it were demonstrated, which it cannot be, that the household did contain infants, it would still remain to be proved that those infants were included in the baptisms."

5. "This is all that can fairly be gathered from the Scripture-record concerning Lydia's household; and it must be borne in mind that the burden of proof rests with those who assume that her household contained infants, and that those infants were baptized."

"But is there not another point of importance regarding the household of Lydia?" asked the superintendent.

"Perhaps you will mention it," I replied.

6. "It is this," responded the superintendent. "Before Paul and Silas departed from Philippi, they paid a farewell visit to the house of Lydia; and we read that 'when they had seen the *brethren* they comforted them, and departed.' Now, so far as the inspired writer informs us, the only professing Christians at Philippi, at that time, were the households of the jailor and of Lydia. But the apostle and Silas had just left the prison in order to return to the house of Lydia, who had recently been showing him hospitality. It would appear, therefore, that the '*brethren*' who are here referred to were the members of her household; and as they were of such an age as to be 'comforted,' or exhorted, by the farewell words of the apostle, they could not have been infants, but must have been persons of intelligence—able to understand and believe the truths which he preached to them."—Acts xvi. 40.

"This point may possibly be as correct and as important as you deem it," I replied; "but I have purposely refrained from adducing it, because I want to keep very close to the distinct testimony of Scripture. The one thing which stands out with great clearness on the sacred page is that the inspired narrative affords no evidence of infants being baptized in Lydia's household, nor, indeed, that her household contained any infants at all. And on this point, I am glad

to read to you some further testimonies of distinguished Infant-Baptists:—

Dr. WHITBY:—And when she and those of her household were instructed in the Christian faith and in the nature of baptism required by it, she was baptized and her household.—*Paraphrase on Acts xvi. 14-15.*

Professor DE WETTE:—This passage . . . has been adduced in proof of the apostolical authority of infant-baptism; but there is no evidence that any except adults were baptized.—*Comment on Acts xvi. 15.*

Dr. ADAM CLARKE:—*She attended unto the things.* She believed them and received them as the doctrines of God, and in this faith she was joined by her whole family, and in it they were all baptized.—*Comment on Acts xvi. 14.*

Professor J. R. LUMBY, D.D.:—*She was baptized and her household.* Of a like baptizing of a household, see verse 33, and also compare xi. 14. We are not justified in concluding from these passages that infants were baptized. "Household" might mean slaves and freedwomen.—*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges.*

Dean PLUMPTRE:—The statement that "her household" were baptized has often been urged as evidence that infant-baptism was the practice of the apostolic age. It must be admitted, however, that this is to read a great deal between the lines. . . . Moreover, there is no evidence that she had children, or even that she was married.—*Comment on Acts xvi. 15, in Ellicott's New Testament Commentary for English Readers.*

Further testimonies, by more recent writers, are the following:—

Professor KNOWLING, D.D.:—As in the case of Cornelius, so here, the household is received as one into the fold of Christ—compare verse 33 and xviii. 8. We cannot say whether children or not were included. . . . Possibly Euodia and Syntyche and the other women—Phil. iv. 2, 3—may have been included in the *familia* of Lydia, who may have employed many slaves and freed women in her trade.—*Comment on Acts xvi. 15, in Expositor's Greek Testament, vol. ii.*

Professor J. VERNON BARTLET, M.A., of Mansfield College, Oxford:—*And her household.* Compare verse 32, where Paul and Silas preach to all in the jailor's house, and "he and all his" are baptized forthwith.—See also xviii. 8.—Such wholesale conversion strikes us as artificial: but we must remember the solidarity of feeling in an ancient family, and the example of an earnest mistress would greatly sway her domestics, some of whom at least were, no doubt, among the women of verse 13. See Phil.

iv. 2, for the prominence of women in the Philippian church.—*The Century Bible. Comment on Acts xvi. 15.*

Professor RAMSAY, D.C.L. :—As her husband is not mentioned and she was a householder, she was probably a widow; and she may be taken as an ordinary example of the freedom with which women lived and worked both in Asia Minor and in Macedonia.

. . . It is not to be inferred that Lydia and her household were baptized on the first Sabbath. A certain interval must be admitted in verse 14, which shows Luke's looseness about time. Lydia was present on the first Sabbath and became a regular hearer; and, finally, *her entire household came over with her.*—*St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen pp. 214, 215.*

The “We now come,” I proceeded, to the im-
Household of portant case of the Philippian jailor: and I
the Jailor. think it will soon be evident to you that the
Scripture-narrative says nothing which can suggest that his
baptized household contained infants—*Acts xvi. 31—34.*

1. “From the phrase ‘he and all his,’ it seems probable that the jailor had a family; but the Scriptures leave this matter in uncertainty. For anyone to assert, therefore, as some have done, that he must have had a family; and then to infer that some of its members were infants, and that they were baptized, is the merest conjecture—a begging of the question in dispute.

2. “The Scriptures inform us, however, that Paul and Silas ‘spake the Word of the Lord unto him, *with all that were in his house.*’ But, surely, they would not preach the gospel to unconscious babes! If any such were actually contained in his family, and even if they were present at the time of the preaching, and under his care, they certainly could not be included as among the auditors whom Paul addressed. Since, therefore, they could not be included as among the auditors, it is simply guesswork to suppose that they were included among those who were afterwards baptized.

3. “We read, further, that Paul and Silas said to him, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house.’ The phrase ‘and thy house’ is most important. It does not, of course, mean that the jailor’s faith would save his household, or that it would necessarily be reproduced in them. It was an encourage-

ment to his household to accept the gospel ; and it assured them that they also would be saved if only they believed. Surely, the apostle would not have used such a phrase in reference to unconscious infants, who, as we well know, were incapable of believing."

4. "But," interrupted the superintendent, "I have been informed that, in verse 34, the words translated 'rejoiced' and 'believed' are in the singular number. Is this correct? If so, what bearing has it upon the matters in dispute?"

"It is quite correct," I replied; "and if these words stood alone, they would indicate that, although 'he and all his' household were baptized, yet only he himself believed and rejoiced. Thus, if it could be shewn that the believing and rejoicing were strictly confined to the jailor, it might be possible to argue that one or more unconscious infants were baptized as members of his household; although argument is of little worth when without foundation in facts."

"But," exclaimed the superintendent, "that cannot be shewn. On the contrary, the Scripture-narrative states expressly that the jailor 'rejoiced, *with all his house.*'"

"Quite so," I replied. "Although the words 'rejoiced' and 'believed' are in the singular number, yet between these two words there is placed the adverb *πανοιξε* which is rightly translated 'with all his house.' By this adverb the word 'rejoiced' is qualified; and the two words are inseparably connected. The jailor 'rejoiced, *with all his house*, having believed in God.'

"The structure of the sentence required the use of the singular number. The same rule applies in English, in forms of speech implying *association* ["with"] on the part of the subject of the sentence. The objection is therefore without force.

"Some commentators connect the adverb *πανοιξε* with the word 'believed,' by which construction the whole household would be named believers. Others connect it with the word 'rejoiced.' But in each case the practical result is the same. Unconscious babes could neither have

believed nor rejoiced in reference to the things of God. If, therefore, we associate the baptized household with the jailor's believing; or if we merely associate them with his rejoicing—in either case it will be evident that the persons composing the baptized household must have been of an age to exercise intelligence, understanding, and volition. Therefore, they could not have been irresponsible infants.

“But the probability is that the adverb *παραίξει* stands in relation both to the believing and the rejoicing. On this point I would draw your attention to the following quotation from a recent Commentary on the Revised Version. It is from the pen of an eminent member of the Company of Revisers, and one, therefore, who is well qualified to speak:—

Rev. Prebendary HUMPHRY, B.D.:—‘Rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God.’—This is the Greek order; and the participle in the perfect tense shews that the cause of the rejoicing was the having *professed their belief*.—*Commentary on the Revised Version, Acts xvi. 34.*

“It seems to me, therefore, to be beyond all doubt or question that the baptized household of the jailor was a household of rejoicing believers; and it would be easy to give the testimonies of many eminent Infant-Baptists who have come to the same conclusion.”

I then read to the class such extracts as the following:—

JOHN WESLEY:—‘*Thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*’ If ye believe. They did so, and were saved.—*Notes on Acts xvi. 31, 32.*

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY NEW TESTAMENT.—Afterwards he took them up to his house, and gave them something to eat, exceedingly glad that *he and his household had come to believe in God*.—*Translation of Acts xvi. 34.*

Professor SCHLEUSNER:—The jailor is said to have “believed in God with all his house;” that is, with all his family to have accepted and approved the Christian doctrine.—*Lexicon of New Testament Greek, vol. ii. p. 591.*

RICHARD BAXTER:—They instructed him and his household, that they might indeed believe and be saved. He and his household were presently baptized, as having professed their resolved faith in Christ.—*Paraphrase of the New Testament, Acts xvi. 32, 33.*

Dr. ADAM CLARKE:—It appears that he and his whole family, who were capable of receiving instruction, embraced this doctrine, and showed the sincerity of their faith by immediately receiving baptism.—*Comment on Acts xvi. 32.*

Dean ALFORD:—*And thy house*—does not mean that *his* faith would save his household; but that the same way was open to them as to him—"Believe and thou shalt be saved—and the same of thy household." On verse 34, he says—The full meaning is—"Rejoiced that he with all his house had been led to believe in God."—*Greek Testament, Acts xvi. 31, 32.*

Archbishop SUMNER:—*And thy house.* Thy family, which may follow thy example, all shall become part of the Lord's family. On verse 33, he says—The same grace which had reached his heart, extended to his household also; and they too received the message of the apostles, and were baptized.—*Exposition of Acts xvi. 31-33.*

DEAN PLUMPTRE:—Those who are said to have been baptized are obviously identical with those whom St. Paul addressed—the word "all" is used in each case—and must, therefore, have been of an age to receive instruction together with the jailor himself. *Comment on Acts xvi. 33, in Elliott's New Testament Commentary for English Readers.*

Professor J. VERNON BARTLET, M.A., of Mansfield College, Oxford:—Though we may suppose that the faith of some members of a household which came over thus *en masse* to an unfamiliar religion was rather crude and impersonal, yet at least it was after hearing "the word of the Lord (Jesus)" that they were baptized: so with Lydia's household, verse 15.—*The Century Bible. Comment on Acts xvi. 31, 32.*

Professor J. R. LUMBY, D.D.:—The Greek adverb which is represented by the last four words in English—"with all his house"—would be better combined with the first verb, "and rejoiced with all his house." So Revised Version. The concluding verb gives the reason for the joy, and would be more fully rendered "having believed in God," or "having believed God."—*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. The Acts. Notes on xvi. 34.*

When I had proceeded thus far, the three teachers who had written to me, expressed their thanks, and said that they were quite satisfied; and as this seemed to be the case with the whole class, I was just about to conclude with prayer when the superintendent said:—

A Subtle Objection. "I hope, sir, you will excuse me; but there is one point more which I should like to mention. It is this: The New Testament never mentions, in express terms, a case of the baptism of an adult son or daughter of a Christian household. From this silence, some of my friends infer that, in the time of the apostles, whenever fathers or mothers were baptized, their infant children were baptized along with them."

Faith “You have stated the case clearly,” I
Demanded for replied; “but the inference which you men-
Baptism. tion has not the slightest warrant in the
 Word of God. In the apostolic age, baptism, so far as the
 New Testament informs us, was administered to those only
 who professed repentance of their sins and faith in Christ
 our Lord.

No Ancestral 1. “This was the principle on which John
Religion. the Baptist inaugurated the sacred rite.
 When he refused to baptize many of the Pharisees and
 Sadducees who came to him, he struck at the root of
 ancestral religion, and shewed that true godliness is a
 personal thing, a matter between each individual soul and
 its God. ‘Bring forth,’ he said, ‘fruit worthy of re-
 pentance; and think not to say within yourselves, We
 have Abraham to our father.’—Matt. iii. 8, 9.

2. “Our Lord and His apostles reiterated and empha-
 sised this idea of the personal character of true religion.
 The dangerous dogma of repenting and believing by proxy,
 had not then been invented.

Baptism a “Hence, there was no reason why special
Profession of mention should be made of the baptism of
Personal adult members of Christian families. Their
Faith. need of personal salvation was as great as
 that of the heathen themselves; and the way of salvation
 was then, as it is now, the same for everyone. Whenever,
 therefore, the offspring of Christian parents were baptized,
 they would receive the sacred rite, not because of relation-
 ship to their parents, but because they professed repentance
 towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Under these circumstances,” said the superintendent,
 “the fact that no mention is made in the Scriptures of the
 baptism of the adult sons or daughters of Christian house-
 holds, furnishes no argument in favour of infant-baptism.”

Opposition to “None, whatever,” I replied; “and if
Infant-Baptism. ever you should study the origin and his-
 tory of infant-baptism, you will find that at its introduction,
 and for many years after, the baptism of infants was earn-

estly opposed ; that as late as the third and fourth centuries, prominent Christian parents did not have their infant children baptized ; and, in fact, that the baptism of the infants of Christian parents, even at that period, had not come to be regarded as either obligatory or usual. This is clearly shown by Dean Stanley."

Dean STANLEY:—Even among Christian households, the instances of Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Ephrem of Edessa, Augustine, Ambrose—are decisive proofs, that infant-baptism was not only not obligatory, but not usual. They had Christian parents ; and yet they were not baptized till they reached maturity.—*Christian Institutions*, 1881, p. 22.

The Objection Recoils. 3. "Moreover, you will perceive that this inferential argument from the silence of Scripture recoils fatally upon those who adduce it ; for they are confronted by a like inference arising from the fact that the Scriptures are absolutely silent also with reference to the necessary accompaniments and results of infant-baptism. I may mention—directions as to sponsorship for the infants, their subsequent profession of personal faith, and the manner of their admission to full church-membership, on reaching years of responsibility. On all these points, the Scriptures are as silent as they are upon infant-baptism itself, or even upon the baptism of an adult son or daughter of a Christian household. The fact is, infant-baptism was altogether unknown in the apostolic age ; and that is the reason why the Word of God makes no allusion to it."

"We thank you, sir, for your full and lucid explanations," said the superintendent ; "and we hope that, on some future occasion, you will help us still further in our enquiries."

Household-Baptisms often occur now. "That I will gladly endeavour to do," I responded. "In the meantime, I would ask you to bear in mind that household-baptism is not an uncommon experience in our own times. It has often happened in periods of revival that every member of a household has accepted Christ, and has put on Christ in baptism at the same time. Many instances could be cited from the foreign mission field ; and also in our own land."

CHAPTER XVI.

DID JOHN DERIVE BAPTISM FROM THE JEWISH RABBIS?

WHEN my friend the Rev. J. Thorpe came once more to see me, he said :—

Whence was “Pardon me for calling again so soon; but
John’s I want to resume our conversation on infant-
Baptism? baptism. The fact is, I am beginning to be
rather uneasy; for I now feel constrained, as a matter of
honour, to admit that there is no direct sanction for infant-
baptism in the New Testament. But do you think such
sanction is really necessary?”

“I do, most certainly!” I replied; “for baptism is one of the positive ordinances of Christianity; and, therefore, the New Testament is our only authority and guide in reference to it.”

Was it “But,” said Mr. Thorpe, “my idea is that
Mosaic? there was no necessity for infant-baptism to
be *commanded* in the New Testament; because, under the
Mosaic dispensation, whenever Gentiles became proselytes
of righteousness to the Jewish Commonwealth, they and all
their children were baptized; and their baptism was a
necessary part of the religious ceremony which initiated
them into Judaism. John the Baptist, and also our
Lord and His apostles, would be well acquainted with
this custom; would naturally transfer it to the Christian
dispensation; and, hence, would baptize the infant-children
of their disciples.”

“Indeed!” I replied. “And where did you learn all this?”

“Learn it!” replied Mr. Thorpe, “I have read it in numerous works that defend infant-baptism; but, in particular, I rely upon the testimony of the great Jewish authority, Maimonides, who says that from the earliest

times, circumcision, baptism, and the offering of a sacrifice were the initiatory rites of the Jewish Commonwealth."

MAIMONIDES:—Israel entered into covenant by three things—circumcision, baptism, and offering. Whenever a heathen wishes to enter into the covenant, and be gathered under the wings of the Shekinah, and take on himself the yoke of the Law, there are necessary for him circumcision, baptism, and offering; and for a woman baptism and offering.—*Issure Biah, Cap. xiii.*

An Israelite that takes a little heathen child, or finds a heathen infant, and baptizes him for a proselyte; behold, he is a proselyte.—*Halach Avadim, Cap. viii.*

Maimonides "But are you aware," I asked, "how late too late. in the Christian Era Maimonides lived?"

"Not exactly," replied Mr. Thorpe; "but I know it was some considerable time."

"Considerable time!" I exclaimed. "Why, it was eleven hundred years! What value, therefore, can attach to the testimony of Maimonides as to a Jewish custom which, on inferential grounds alone, he affirmed to have existed hundreds of years before the time of Christ."

Principal H. R. REYNOLDS, D.D.:—Maimonides in the twelfth century is an indifferent authority certainly for what had been Jewish custom in the first century.—*John the Baptist, p. 232.*

"But, surely, there must be some truth in what Maimonides said," remarked Mr. Thorpe.

A "Mare's Nest." "Well," I answered, "permit me to inform you that you have discovered a mare's nest. I confess that, when I was a young man, this theory of Jewish proselyte-baptism had great weight with me; but, on mature consideration, I have come to the conclusion that it rests upon a foundation of mere conjecture, which is like 'the baseless fabric of a vision.'"

"I should like to hear the reasons which led you to arrive at that conclusion," said Mr. Thorpe.

An Historical Question. 1. "I will state them with pleasure," I responded; "and, first of all, permit me to remind you that as this is an historical question, it must

be tested by the methods which are usually adopted in historical investigations."

"Quite so," answered Mr. Thorpe.

"Well, then," I proceeded, "will you kindly inform me at what time proselyte-baptism was first practised, and who originated it?"

"That I am unable to do," replied Mr. Thorpe.

"Indeed!" I said. "That is a very strange and suspicious circumstance. You can tell neither when it commenced nor who originated it!"

"True! But I understand that proselyte-baptism has been the universal custom of the Jews from time immemorial," answered Mr. Thorpe.

First, an Illustration. 2. "That statement I must challenge," I answered. "Proselyte-baptism—or, rather, proselyte-immersion—has, doubtless, been practised for many centuries among the Jews; but there is no evidence of its existence, as an initiatory ceremony, before the advent of Christ, or for a considerable period after that time. This I will undertake to prove to you; and I will commence my argument by asking your attention to the following illustration:—

"Suppose that when you open your *Times* newspaper to-morrow morning, you were to read therein a letter in which the writer stated that railway locomotives were in general use in Palestine, and also that steamboats sailed on the Mediterranean Sea at the time of Christ and during several centuries previously. What would you think? Would you accept the statement as correct? Or would you proceed to investigate it? In the latter event, what course of enquiry would you pursue?"

"My first thoughts on reading the statement would be those of astonishment," answered Mr. Thorpe. "I should then enquire into its truthfulness, by examining the Jewish historical records during the centuries referred to."

"Quite so," I remarked; "you would go back to the contemporary literature of the nation by whom the steamboats and locomotives were said to have been used. But supposing, when you did this, you found that, during century after century, no Jewish writer whatever makes any reference to such kinds of locomotion; and that, in fact, they are never mentioned until several hundred years after the advent of Christ. What would you say under such circumstances?"

"I should very likely use some strong language," replied Mr. Thorpe; "but, speaking mildly, I should say that, for some reason or other, the writer in the *Times* had drawn upon his imagination for his facts. But what has this illustration to do with proselyte-baptism?"

The Issue Stated. "It has a great deal to do with it," I answered. "You have asserted that proselyte-baptism was a general custom amongst the Jews at the time of Christ and during many centuries previously. Here I join issue with you; and I ask you to do, in reference to this subject, what you said you would do in regard to the supposed steamboats and locomotives; namely, to go back to the contemporary records of the Jews, and search therein for the custom under consideration. If this be done, I will warrant that you will not be long before you agree with me that the custom of proselyte-baptism, as an initiatory ceremony, cannot be found before the birth of Christ, or during the life of Christ, or even for many years afterwards."

"You are very confident," replied Mr. Thorpe; "but while I must tell you that I shall not be easily convinced, I promise you that I will give a candid consideration to all your arguments."

Now for the Facts. "I can well afford to be confident," I responded; "for I have a good case: and, besides, I know that I am dealing with an honest man, who desires to know the truth. I will, therefore, at once, ask your serious attention to the following tabular statement:—

PROSELYTE-BAPTISM WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES OF HISTORY.

Name of Book.	When Written.	References to Proselyte- Baptism.
Old Testament	Prior to 300 B.C.	None.
Apocrypha	About 200 B.C.	None.
New Testament	Prior to 100 A.D.	None.
Josephus	About 60 A.D.	None.
Philo.....	About 50 A.D.	None.
The Targums	Before 100 A.D.	None.
The Mishna.....	About 220 A.D.	None.
The Apostolic Fathers...	Before 100 A.D.	None.
The Early Fathers	Up to 300 A.D.	None.

Significant Silence. 3. "I have now," I resumed, "given you the names of the books which were known among the Jews from the earliest times, some of which record numerous instances of the initiation of proselytes by circumcision, beginning from Abraham's household; and I have also carried you down to the Fathers of the third century after Christ—a period of about 2,000 years; and in none of these books is there any mention made of the custom of proselyte-baptism among the Jewish people. The circumcision of proselytes is frequently mentioned; but their baptism never. How do you account for this?"

"If what you say is correct, I cannot account for it," answered Mr. Thorpe.

Testimonies of Infant-Baptists. "Correct!" I responded. "My statement is incontrovertible. I will give you some testimonies of eminent Infant-Baptists, from which you will see that I have not overstated the case."

Dr. LARDNER:—As for the baptism of Jewish proselytes, I take it to be a mere fiction of the Rabbis.—Quoted in *Ingham's Subjects of Baptism*, p. 278.

Dr. HALLEY:—It would be uncandid not to state, that several scholars of great name, as Dr. Owen, Carpzovius, Lardner, Doddridge, Van Dale, Ernesti, Paulus, De Wette, Stuart, and others, either deny or doubt that the baptism of proselytes was prevalent in the time of our Lord.—*The Sacraments*, vol. i. p. 105.

Dr. P. FAIRBAIRN:—After referring to the idea of some, that Jewish proselyte-baptism existed before the time of Christ, he says: Later and more discriminating investigations, however, have shewn this view to be untenable. . . . There is no

evidence of a Jewish proselyte-baptism till about the fourth century of the Christian Era.—*Imperial Bible Dictionary*, Article on *Baptism*.

Professor MOSES STUART:—There is no trace of any such rite as baptism, prescribed by the Jewish ceremonial law, as an *initiatory* rite, that is, as one which was essential in order to make a profession of the Jewish religion. . . . Ablution was not an original condition of membership under the ancient dispensation. It was *obligatory* in many forms upon those who were *already members* of it, but *not to their becoming so*.—*Biblical Repository*, vol. iii. pp. 339, 341.

A Supposed 4. "But are you correct in saying that no
Mishnic reference is made to proselyte-baptism in the
Allusion. Jewish Mishna?" asked Mr. Thorpe.

"I am," I replied. "I will, however, quote a passage which some think may possibly refer to the custom:—

A proselyte who was circumcised the evening before the Passover, may, according to the School of Shammai, bathe, and eat the Passover in the evening; but the School of Hillel say, that he who has just been circumcised is as he who has just left a grave.—*Pesachim*, viii. 8.

"Now, the meaning of this passage is easily gathered from its context, which refers, not to any ceremony special and peculiar to proselytes, as such; but to the removal of ceremonial uncleanness, in persons of mature life, whether of natural Jews or Jewish proselytes, before they could be permitted to eat the Passover. The whole of the context refers to this subject, and, like Numbers xix. 11—19, prescribes the rules for ceremonial purification, which were common alike to all who would eat the Passover, whether they were Jewish proselytes or Jews by birth.

"The question in dispute was this: In case a Gentile had been initiated, by circumcision, into Judaism, on Passover eve,—could he eat the Passover the next day? Shammai said, 'Yes, if he makes his ablution first;' that is, dips or washes. Hillel said, 'No; for to come from the presence of the circumcisor is like coming from a grave;' that is, it is defiling, even as touching the dead would be. A person thus defiled, was, by the Mosaic Law, cut off from the assembly of Israel until he had been ceremonially purified. —Numbers xix. 11—22.

Discussion "As to the dispute between the Schools of
indicates Hillel and Shammai, if it means anything, it
Development. shows that there was no established practice. At most, it can but imply the *growth* of the practice of baptism—or ceremonial washing with some such significance—rather than its established prevalence. To be the subject of discussion, meant that ablutionary practices were being pushed to the front, or given a new place or significance.

"In a word, if the reference is really to a baptismal practice, then it shews that practice to have been sectarian rather than general in Israel. It was a subject of *difference*. If it was primitive, it had nevertheless fallen out of use. Can this possibly be believed? The very fact of the discussion shows tendency and development.

Proselyte- "Moreover, although in the Mishna many
Ablution cases are referred to of persons becoming
Obviously proselytes, in no instance is there any men-
Unimportant. tion made of their baptism.

When 5. "The fact is, the question of proselyte-
Proselyte- baptism is never mentioned until we come to
Baptism first the Jerusalem Talmud, which was written
appears. about the middle of the fourth century after Christ. The Babylonian Talmud, which is a still later production, also mentions it; but there is no trace of it, as I have already shewn, for at least three centuries after Christ."

The Argument "I fear I must admit the cogency and
Convincing. sufficiency of your argument," replied Mr. Thorpe. "At all events, I see no way of meeting it at present. I had attached great importance to this matter of proselyte-baptism, and in particular to the testimony of Maimonides, who is frequently quoted as its chief authority. But he lived eleven centuries after Christ; and as no writer belonging to the times of the Old and New Testaments, or up to three hundred years after Christ, makes any mention of that custom, the testimony of Maimonides is of very little historical value, as to its existence during those periods."

"Quite so," I replied. "It is all mere conjecture and guess-work, for which there is no historical foundation whatever.

Jewish Writers not Agreed. 6. "Moreover, some of the ancient Jewish Rabbis clearly shew that they neither knew nor allowed anything of the nature of an initiatory rite of proselyte-baptism in connection with the reception of proselytes into the family of Israel. Some, in fact, sneered at Christian-baptism, and ridiculed and denounced it as an unauthorised invention of our Lord. Rabbi Isaac and the ancient Nizzachon may be mentioned as illustrations of the truth of this statement.

The Evidence Unreliable. 7. "Besides, supposing that all the ancient Jewish writers had been agreed in stating that John the Baptist and our Lord had borrowed their initiatory rite from proselyte-baptism, even in that case their evidence would have been unreliable in an historical controversy. As a rule, their credit is at the lowest ebb imaginable; for their writings are often fanciful and false, sometimes scandalous and even blasphemous. It seems to me a very strange thing that Christian divines should, in their defence of infant-baptism, rely upon ancient Jewish writings which openly defamed and blasphemed Christ and His apostles, and that in language of the most daring description."

A Singular Question. 8. "But," interrupted Mr. Thorpe, "do we not read, in the Ethiopic Version of the New Testament, that the Pharisees 'compass sea and land to baptize one proselyte?' And does not the employment of the words, 'baptize one proselyte,' imply the existence of the practice of proselyte-baptism at the time when the Ethiopic Version was prepared?"

"You have certainly quoted the Version correctly," I replied; "and if such a passage had been found in the Hebrew Old Testament, it would have shewn conclusively that proselyte-baptism was practised before the advent of Christ. Or if our Lord had spoken such words, and we had

read them in the New Testament, they would have settled the question for ever. But there is not one word about proselyte-baptism in any portion of the original Scriptures. Our Lord, when censuring the Pharisees, said, 'Ye compass sea and land to *make* one proselyte.'—Matt. xxiii. 15. He said nothing about *baptizing* a proselyte."

The Ethiopic Version. 9. "How, then," asked Mr. Thorpe, "can we account for the word 'baptize' appearing in the Ethiopic Version?"

Conversion and Baptism Confused. "The answer is very simple," I replied. "The word 'baptize' is a gloss, appearing in a Version of only slight value, dating from the sixth or seventh century of our Era. It suggests a time when sacraments were invested with qualities not associated with them in Holy Scripture. As, in a corrupted form of Christianity, proselytes were 'made' mechanically, by baptism; so the translator of our Lord's words transferred to baptism the statement regarding the making of proselytes.

"This is by no means exceptional. The Syriac Peshito Version of the New Testament has greater value; and yet therein a like flagrant error in translation is found twice in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In chapter vi. verse 4, for 'those who were once enlightened,' we read, 'those who have once *descended into baptism*'; and in chapter x. verse 32, for 'after ye were illuminated,' we read, 'after ye *received baptism*.' These, however, are not renderings; and they have no authority. They are glosses; and though in some degree interesting to the historian, they must not be allowed to weigh in interpreting the original, which is so plain and obvious in meaning.

"The Encyclopædia Britannica—a thoroughly trustworthy and independent authority—in its article on the Ethiopic Version, may well remark that, 'In the course of centuries, it has undergone numberless alterations at the hands of copyists.' The article also alludes to its 'most corrupted condition.'

The True Standard. 10. "This question, however, is not to be settled by an audacious gloss in Versions new or old, but by the undoubted words of our Lord and Master, as recorded in the Greek New Testament."

"So far as you have gone," said Mr. Thorpe, "you have a good case; and one can only regret that proselyte-baptism should be bolstered up by quoting the Ethiopic Version, the translators of which have virtually substituted for one word used by our Lord, another which by no means expresses the same sense. And I feel compelled to admit that if I find your history correct, and if we are to apply to proselyte-baptism the tests of ordinary historical investigation, I must give up the idea of there being any adequate evidence that it was practised before the Christian Era."

Remarkable Confirmation. "I have no doubt you will find my history correct," I replied; "but I would draw your special attention to the remarkable confirmation of my argument by Professor Schneckenburger. This eminent German scholar published, in the year 1828, what may justly be called *the* Classic upon the subject of proselyte-baptism. His work is entitled, *Ueber das Alter der jüdischen Proselyten Taufe*. After the most critical and exhaustive examination of every Jewish authority which could be adduced in favour of the idea that proselyte-baptism existed before the time of Christ, he says:—

"From the facts already adduced, we believe that we are entitled to hold firmly to the following general results:—

1. "The statement of the Talmud cannot be justified, either with itself or in comparison with other historical records, in the sense that therefrom a prescribed custom of proselyte-baptism could be proved."

2. "The evidence adduced from earlier writings in support of the Talmudic accounts cannot make any claim to probability, much less to the necessary certainty."

3. "The internal evidences which are furnished to us by the silence of the most important writers, as well as by some of the facts narrated by them, retain their force."

4. “‘The difficulties in the way of accounting for the origin of this custom among the Jews, after it had already existed among Christians, are not very great. Nay, indeed, we can give many very probable reasons for its origin at that later period, even as it is at that later period only that we discover dependable evidences of its existence.’

5. “‘Therefore, any idea of the derivation of the Johannine and Christian rite of baptism from this Jewish custom is not to be thought of ; and there are presented to us for that derivation usages more closely related to the Johannine and Christian rite, both in respect of form and significance.’

Arguments “Professor Schneckenburger—who, it should be borne in mind, was a Lutheran, and not a Baptist—then proceeds to sum up his arguments in detail as follows :—

1. “‘The regular reception of Gentiles into Judaism took place, so long as the Temple remained standing, by means of circumcision and sacrifice. The circumcision was followed, and the sacrifice—like every sacrifice—was preceded by a lustration, which, in common with all other lustrations, was considered merely as a Levitical cleansing.’

2. “‘This lustration was not different in its outward form from the usual lustrations. On the contrary, like them, it was carried out by the proselytes themselves.’

3. “‘This lustration came, little by little—though the change cannot be shown to have taken place before the end of the third century—to take the place of the discontinued sacrifice, and became combined with the circumcision upon which it followed, though still, as a rule, remaining a self-lustration. But this lustration only came into use separate from circumcision in the case of women. In the case of servants and foundlings only, it preceded circumcision by an indefinite period ; but in the case of foundlings alone, it first of all came into use as a proper rite of initiation.’

4. “‘This lustration is of less value for the explanation of the Johannine and Christian rite than are lustrations in

general in their symbolic significance. This Johannine and Christian rite is most naturally brought into relation [for purposes of explanation] with the expectation of a Messianic baptism.'

Proselyte-Baptism out of Court. "This remarkable testimony of Professor Schneckenburger ought, I think, to convince everyone that there is no evidence of the existence of proselyte-baptism, as an initiatory rite, prior to the fourth century after Christ; and it ought, further, to prevent any scholar from ever assuming, as a matter of argument, that our Lord and His forerunner borrowed their sacred rite of initiation from proselyte-baptism."

A Present-day Objection. "But," asked Mr. Thorpe, "do not all the Jewish Rabbis of the present day practise proselyte-baptism, and state that it has been an Israelitish custom from the earliest periods of Israel's history? And do they not quote Genesis xxxv. verse 2, in justification of their statement?"

The Slavery of Custom. "Undoubtedly they do," I replied. "But this is not to be wondered at. When once the ceremony of proselyte-baptism had originated and had been extensively adopted, it would naturally descend, as a national custom, from one generation to another, gathering, in the meantime, increased traditional authority from age to age. The very circumstances which gave rise to the innovation would tend to perpetuate it, and to make its continuance and universal acceptance practically inevitable. The passage of Scripture to which you have referred, cannot be shewn to have any connection with proselyte-baptism as an initiating ceremony, which has no authority whatever, except that kind of Rabbinical traditionalism which our Lord so severely condemned."—Mark vii. 6—13.

Before proceeding to the next conversation, dealing with other aspects of the same subject, the reader will, doubtless, be specially interested in perusing the following recent testimonies in reference to proselyte-baptism:—

THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA:—The subject of the baptism of proselytes is one of the most hopelessly obscure in the whole round of Jewish antiquities, and can never be safely assumed in any argument; and the general results of investigations seem to prove that the baptism of proselytes was not one of the Jewish ceremonies until long after the coming of Christ, while there is much to suggest that this Jewish rite owes its origin to Christian-baptism.—Article on *Baptism*—ninth edition.

Dr. A. PLUMMER, Master of University College, Durham:—We may safely assert that there is no mention of proselyte-baptism anywhere in the Old Testament or in the Apocrypha. The New Testament is equally silent. And this is by no means all—Josephus, Philo, and the older Targumists are silent also; and there is little more than a probable allusion to it in the Mishna. None of the early Christian writers seem to know anything about it; and this is especially notable in the case of those who have discussed Judaism, or baptism, or both; for instance, Barnabas, Justin Martyr, and Tertullian. . . . What is wanted is direct evidence that before John the Baptist made so remarkable a use of the rite, it was the custom to make all proselytes submit to baptism; and such evidence is not forthcoming.—*Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. i. p. 239.

Professor Dr. KEIL:—Neither do the Old and New Testament Scriptures, nor Josephus, Philo, and the older Targumists, know anything whatever of baptism as an independent and indispensable qualification for admission to Judaism. The first time that it is plainly mentioned is in the Babylonian *Gemara*; while it would seem not to have been introduced as a rite of initiation properly so called, and in lieu of the sacrifice that had now been discontinued, till after the entire cessation of the sacrificial worship in the third century. It was probably an adaptation of an act of ablution or bathing with water, such as we may well suppose would in every age accompany the circumcising of a Gentile, seeing that the Mosaic law forbade the unclean to take part in any religious observance till they had been cleansed by bathing in water.—Ex. xix. 10. But if the baptism of proselytes was of so late an origin, then it is of course impossible that the baptism of John, or Christian-baptism, can have been borrowed from it. It is much more likely that the Jews, after the discontinuance of the Temple worship, may have taken occasion from Christian-baptism to transform the customary bathing with water that was required in order to purification, and which the person to be purified had to perform himself, into a formal act of baptism, having the character of a rite of initiation.—*Manual of Biblical Archæology*. Translated from the German by Rev. P. Christie. Vol. i., p. 427.

CHAPTER XVII.

JOHN'S BAPTISM A NEW AND DIVINE ORDINANCE.

Proselyte-Baptism Unproven. WHEN my friend Mr. Thorpe came again to see me, he said:—"I am anxious to hear what you have still to say on the subject of proselyte-baptism. I find from my reading, since I last saw you, that it is now generally admitted that there is no historical evidence of proselyte-baptism further back than about three centuries after the birth of our Lord. Yet certain divines persist in *inferring* that it *must* have existed long before the commencement of the Christian Era."

An Unwarrantable Inference. "Yes," I replied, "it is only too correct that these unwarrantable inferences are still indulged in. But you must remember that habits of thought are not easily relinquished. Customs, such as infant-baptism, which have existed for centuries, are not soon displaced. Dead branches sometimes hang long upon living trees; and the lifeless branch of proselyte-baptism, which has so long been mechanically attached to the tree of divine truth, will still for many years be spoken of as if it were an integral portion of its beautiful and fruitful boughs."

What might we Expect from John? 1. "But I will now carry the case further. Let us suppose, for argument's sake, that proselyte-baptism was practised by the Jews before the time of John the Baptist. As such baptism was not sanctioned, or even alluded to, in the Scriptures—and was, therefore, a human invention—it is most improbable that John would adopt and practise it amongst his disciples. In accordance with the strictness and severity of his teaching and life, he would naturally abjure any merely human custom; would seek to deliver the Jews from all traditionalism; and would endeavour to bring them back to entire

obedience to the institutions and commands of God's Holy Word."

"That is a point entirely in your favour!" said Mr. Thorpe.

Did John 2. "I am glad to hear you say so," I
Modify a responded. "But I ask you to bear in
Jewish mind, further, that even if John the Baptist
Ordinance? had actually adopted proselyte-baptism from
the Jewish Rabbis, it would not follow that he practised it
upon the same basis as they did. On this point you will be
interested to hear what is the opinion of Principal H. R.
Reynolds, D.D., at whose feet I used to sit when at
Cheshunt College. Although inclined to favour the idea
that some form of proselyte-baptism existed prior to the
days of John the Baptist, yet he says:—

Principal H. R. REYNOLDS, D.D.:—We do not know, and cannot determine, the model that, under God's inspiration, guided his course; and we are inclined to believe that, alike as to matter and form, mode and subject, he struck out a path for himself. The moral effect of his preaching, the cry for help which answered his cry for repentance, the multitudes who thronged around him, and the eagerness with which they complied with his requirements, forced upon him certain modifications of the rite, and suddenly created an institution or ordinance for which no exact parallel had existed in previous times.—*John the Baptist*, p. 286.

John's "Then, if President Reynolds is right,"
Baptism said Mr. Thorpe, "nothing whatever can be
Unique. inferred as to the subjects of John's baptism
from the supposed Rabbinical custom of proselyte-baptism
prior to his time."

"You have expressed the idea clearly," I answered. "If it could be proved to an absolute certainty that the Jews were accustomed to baptize proselytes and their children before the time of John the Baptist, it would not, in the least degree, help the cause of our Infant-Baptist brethren; for there is no evidence whatever that John adopted his rite from them, or that he practised it upon the same basis as they. All the evidence points in the opposite direction.

Infant-Baptism Differs from Jewish Ablution. 3. "Moreover, not only is proselyte-baptism not met with in history until about three hundred years after Christ, but it should be remembered that, when it did begin to be practised, it differed in several essential respects from the present opinions and customs of Infant-Baptists. For instance, according to Maimonides, it was a complete immersion. It was more of a civil than a religious ceremony. And, further, infants that were born after the admission of their parents to the Jewish community, were not baptized at all. If, therefore, infant-baptism be looked upon as a continuation of proselyte-baptism, it would follow that children born of baptized Christian parents should be regarded as not requiring, or not entitled to, baptism, and would, therefore, have to remain unbaptized."

Believers'-Baptism also Distinct. 4. "But," asked Mr. Thorpe, "does not the apostle, in Hebrews ix. 10, refer to the 'divers washings,' or immersions of the Mosaic Dispensation?"

"He does," I answered. "But there is no analogy between Christian-baptism and the Jewish ablutions, except in one point, namely, that in both there was an immersion in water. Jewish ablution was resorted to for the purpose of removing the defilement of things, as well as of persons; and it was resorted to as frequently as defilement had been contracted. Whereas, Christian-baptism was a personal matter only; was not for the removal of ceremonial defilement; and was administered once for all, into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, Jewish ablutions were self-administered, and were not accompanied by confession of sins, or profession of faith. In these and other points, Jewish ablutions differed entirely from Christian-baptism."

"So far, your evidence has been of a negative character," said Mr. Thorpe; "and I must say that it is worthy of serious consideration; but I should like now to hear something positive."

John's Baptism a Divine Ordinance. "Most gladly will I come to the positive part of the subject, from which you will see that, according to the testimony of Holy Scripture, John's baptism was an entirely new and divinely-appointed ordinance.

John above the Rabbis. 1. "To imagine that John adopted baptism from a mere Rabbinical invention, would greatly detract from the character of the Baptist, from his Divine mission, and from the importance of baptism in any serious view.

Dr. DOELLINGER:—John introduced the rite of immersion in Jordan. . . . This was not borrowed from the Jewish custom of baptizing proselytes, which only came in *after the fall of Jerusalem*.—Quoted in *Ford's Studies on Baptism*, p. 272.

John's Title and Mission. 2. "Why should John have been called by such a distinctive title as 'the Baptist,' if baptism had already been inaugurated and practised for centuries? Why should he affirm that God Himself had *sent* him for the express purpose of baptizing, if baptism had been for centuries familiar to the Jewish people?—John i. 33. Surely the only satisfactory conclusion is that the baptism committed to John was an entirely new and divine ordinance.

Dr. R. HAWKER:—Baptizing was altogether a new rite in the Church; and, probably, John was called "the Baptist" on that account; for he was the first who used it.—*Commentary on Matt. iii. 1—4*.

A New Rite Expected. 3. "It is remarkable that the Pharisees should ask John, 'Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet.'—John i. 25. This seems to shew that they expected that the manifestation of the Messiah would be accompanied by an immersion which He Himself would administer to them, and which they would regard as an entirely new ceremony.

Dr. GEIKIE:—With the call to repent, John united a significant rite for all who were willing to own their sins and promise amendment. It was the *new* and startling requirement of baptism which John had been *sent by Divine appointment to introduce*.—*Life and Words of Christ*, vol. i. p. 394.

John's Baptism "from Heaven." 4. "Our Lord taught that the baptism of John was received 'from heaven,' and not from an ancient Rabbinical custom. Hence, he asked the Pharisees this question:—'The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?' That is to say, Was his baptism of human origin or of divine origin? Had John borrowed his baptism from Jewish proselyte-baptism, it would have been 'from men'; for we have seen that Holy Scripture sanctions no such custom. Had the Pharisees known that John's baptism was simply a continuation, or a modification of Jewish proselyte-baptism, they could have said so, without any fear of offending the people. But their confusion, quibbling, and prevarication, seem to point clearly to one conclusion, namely, that in the estimation of the people, John's baptism, which was the outward symbol and expression of his whole mission and ministry, was a new ordinance, received by him 'from heaven.'—Mark xi. 29—33. In other words, the ordinance was the distinguishing and essential feature of the mission and ministry which, by synecdoche, it expressed. The external act of John's ministry was his baptism; and both the man and the rite were 'sent from God.'—John i. 6, 33.

Professor H. A. W. MEYER:—The baptism of John has been viewed wrongly as a modified application of Jewish proselyte-baptism, which first came into practice after the destruction of Jerusalem.—*Commentary on Matthew, Sec. 97.*

A Significant Designation. 5. "John's baptism is spoken of in the Scriptures as 'the counsel of God.' We read that, 'The Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him.'—Luke vii. 30. This verse evidently teaches that John, in baptizing his disciples, was following, not a Rabbinical invention, but 'the counsel of God'—that is, God's own mind and will. Accordingly, as just remarked, we find John claiming that he had been expressly 'sent to baptize with water,' by God Himself."—John i. 33.

"These considerations," broke in Mr. Thorpe, "seem to me very important."

"They are, indeed, most important," I answered. "In my judgment, they are sufficient to settle the whole question now under consideration. But there are several other points yet to be mentioned.

DE WETTE:—Baptism is, probably, a later institute; for it was not mentioned in the older writings, but only in the Gemara—whose testimony speaks merely for the time *after the destruction of Jerusalem*, and in other later writings.—Quoted in *Ford's Studies on Baptism*, p. 171.

A New and Divine Institution. 6. "John distinctly connected baptism with the revealing of Christ to Israël. His words are, 'And I knew Him not; but that He should be made manifest to Israel; *for this cause* came I baptizing with water.'—John i. 31. This passage clearly identifies John's baptism with the manifestation of Christ unto Israel as the Son of God. Thus, it differentiates John's baptism from all Jewish ablutions of every kind, whether Mosaic or Rabbinical, and places it in a category by itself, as a new and divine institution.

Professor GODET:—The rite of baptism, which consisted in the plunging of the body more or less completely into water, was not at this period in use among the Jews, neither for the Jews themselves—for whom the law only prescribed lustrations—nor for proselytes from Paganism, to whom, according to the testimony of history, baptism was not applied until *after the fall of Jerusalem*. The very title *Baptist*, given to John, sufficiently proves that it was he who introduced the rite.—*Commentary on Luke*, vol. i. p. 172.

The Court of Appeal. 7. "Moreover, it must be borne in mind that, under any circumstances, it is to the New Testament alone that we must look for divine guidance as to the subjects, laws, and conditions of Christian-baptism.

Professor C. H. TOY, D.D.:—When a ceremony becomes Christian, it is governed by the laws prescribed by the Founder of Christianity; it is transferred entirely out of Judaism, for example, into Christianity, and can be defined only by the command and example of Christ and His inspired apostles. The Lord's Supper was founded on the Passover, and the Synagogue very probably furnished the model for the Church; but who would think of having recourse to Jewish customs to determine the persons entitled to partake of the Supper, or to fix the

Christian polity? The resort is here to the New Testament by all bodies of Christians. In like manner, we expect to find in the New Testament all the conditions and laws of Christian-baptism; and what is not there found we cannot accept, even though it should be found to have been practised by the contemporary Jews. If infant-baptism be not explicitly in the New Testament, it cannot be introduced through the medium of proselyte-baptism.—*Baptist Quarterly*, vol. vi. p. 302.

The Solemn Ordinance of God. 8. "Our Lord severely rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees for adding to the Mosaic observances, and for 'teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.'—Matt. xv. 9. It is, therefore, certain that He Himself would never have submitted to be baptized, if John's baptism had been merely a continuation or a modification of a baptism invented by the Rabbis. It must, therefore, have been a new ordinance, appointed by God Himself.

Dr. A. B. BRUCE:—Commenting on the epithet *the Baptist*, applied to John, he remarks: Well known by this epithet, and referred to under that designation by Josephus. Its currency naturally suggests that John's baptism was partly or wholly an originality, not to be confounded with proselyte-baptism, which perhaps did not even exist at that time.—*Expositor's Greek Testament*, Matt. iii, 1.

Rabbinical, not Mosaic. 9. "In the Old Testament economy, very minute directions were given to Israel relating to ablution, which was of three kinds; namely, the washing of the hands, the washing of the hands and feet, and the immersion of the whole body. But the Rabbis, who were the Ritualists of their day, were not satisfied with rendering obedience to these divine directions. They deliberately invented quite a number of ablutionary ceremonies of their own, which descended by tradition to our Lord's time, and which He severely condemned.—Mark vii. 1—13. If, therefore, such a custom as proselyte-baptism existed at the time of Christ, it must have been one of these Rabbinical inventions, or one adapted by the Rabbis from pagan sources, which our Lord censured and forbade; for it is perfectly clear to everyone that proselyte-baptism is not taught in any part of the Holy Scriptures."

I may add here that the Jewish Encyclopedia—a very

recent work of great value, whose contributors include many Jews of eminent position—contains the following remarkable statement in relation to proselyte-baptism:—

THE JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA.—The real significance of the rite of baptism cannot be derived from the Levitical Law; but it appears to have had its origin in Babylonian or ancient Semitic practice.—Article on *Baptism*, vol. ii. p. 500.

A 10. “Moreover, the absolute silence
Convincing of the Mosaic writings as to proselyte-
Silence. baptism furnishes a clear and conclusive
proof that such baptism originally formed no part of the
initiation of a proselyte to the Jewish Commonwealth.
This silence will be seen to be all the more striking, if we
bear in mind that the Levitical Law prescribed immersion
for no fewer than twelve distinct occasions as a ceremonial
purification. But the immersion of the proselyte, for the
purpose of initiation, is nowhere mentioned in Scripture,
either as being required or as having occurred. Proselytes
were initiated by circumcision only; and at the very moment
when the circumcising act was performed, the initiation was
completed.”

How “So far as you have gone,” said Mr.
Proselyte- Thorpe, “you have evidently a good case.
Baptism But will you give me your opinion, in detail,
Arose. as to how proselyte-baptism originated?”

“With pleasure,” I replied. “First of all, I would ask you to remember that, in harmony with the strictly ceremonial character of the religion of Israel, there must always have been purificatory rites connected with the introduction of Gentiles into Judaism. Circumcision—the initiating act—was in itself defiling, and would require a lustration or ablution before the proselyte could proceed to any of his religious duties. But the same may be said of the *Israelitish child*. The lustration was, therefore, in no sense initiatory. It was a ceremonial accessory, not an initiatory rite.

“This ceremonial washing would naturally follow circumcision, as the proselytes had voluntarily become subject, by initiation into Judaism, to the numerous purificatory

ceremonies of the Levitical Law. Ablution in many forms would become obligatory upon them, from time to time, as members of the Jewish Commonwealth; but it was not obligatory to their becoming such.

“Further, when multitudes of Jews accepted John's baptism of repentance, the spiritual ideas symbolised by their Mosaic ablutions would be emphasised; and Jews in general would reason that if they, the chosen people of God, needed such a solemn ceremonial ablution, much more would the Gentiles need it on becoming proselytes!

“Again, after the destruction of the Temple, when all the sacrifices had ceased to be offered, the ceremonial ablutions would acquire additional importance. Subsequently, when women embraced Judaism, lustration would, after a time, gradually become the ceremony of their initiation. From them, the practice would naturally be extended, so as to include male proselytes.

“Moreover, there was, for a time at least, a desire among the Jews to get rid of circumcision, and to adopt a ceremony which would leave no mark upon them. This also would tend to accentuate the importance of ceremonial lustration.

“As modern Jews are very proud of the mark of circumcision, you may be disposed to question the statement that some of the ancient Jews desired to get rid of circumcision. In that case, I can only ask you to consult the Article on Proselyte-baptism in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, where you will find my statement confirmed by perfectly impartial authority.

“Finally, the Jews were still, as they now are, looking for their Messiah; and they wished, in their disorganised condition, to have an ablutionary ceremony which pointed to the purity which they expected that He would bring.

“All these circumstances would conspire to render the adoption of a special ablutionary ceremony a practical necessity of Jewish life. Thus, it would appear that what was originally a mere accessory washing after the defilement

of circumcision, ultimately developed, long after the advent of Christ, into a general proselyte-baptism, as an essential or integral part of the ceremony of initiation."

Did the Jews Imitate Chris- "Then do you think," interrupted Mr Thorpe, "that proselyte-baptism arose as an
tian-Baptism? imitation of Christian-baptism?"

This Impossible. "I do not," I answered. "Such an idea is, to my mind, almost inconceivable. To Jews of all past ages, Christian-baptism must have been—as, indeed, it is to Jews to-day—utterly abhorrent; for the simple reason that it implies a belief and declaration on the part of the recipient that our Lord was the long-expected Messiah. Jews would never adopt or imitate a distinctly Christian rite. Such an act would be self-condemning, and would controvert their national belief, or unbelief, regarding Christ.

They Imitated John's Baptism. "But John's baptism—although to Christians in these days it may appear to signify practically the same as Christian-baptism—has always borne quite another aspect to the Jews. The solemn rite, first introduced by the Baptist, presented no difficulty to the Jews of his time. It was in distinct harmony with their own ablutions and lustrations, with their spiritual significance; and it so far accorded with their Messianic expectations, that when he announced his baptism of repentance and reformation of life, the whole nation seemed, as by one mighty impulse, to rush to the Jordan, in order to participate in the new and sacred ceremony.

"The popularity of John the Baptist—regarded simply as a great national leader and reformer—would, naturally, incline subsequent teachers in Israel to follow in his footsteps. And as his baptism had involved no shame, or cross, or social disqualification; but, on the contrary, had been so popular that practically the whole nation had submitted to it, in expectation of the coming of their Messiah; it ought to occasion no surprise that John's baptism, purely as an ordinance of reformation, should be imitated by subsequent leaders and reformers, and that the ceremony of

proselyte-baptism, thus led up to and prepared for, should have come into vogue at the time specified, and under the circumstances already mentioned.

“The experiences of Israel in the early centuries of our era were altogether favourable to this development. What with deceivers among the nation and persecution from without, many and great opportunities were afforded to the moral and religious reformer and the racial enthusiast.

Dr. JOHN OWEN:—The institution of the rite of baptism is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament. There is no example of it in those ancient records; nor was it ever used in the admission of proselytes while the Jewish Church continued. . . . Nor are there the least footsteps of any such usage among the Jews until after the days of John the Baptist, of whom it was first taken up by some anti-mishnical Rabbis.—Quoted in *Hinton's History of Baptism*, pp. 339, 341.

The Case “These considerations—in conjunction with
Summed up. the summation of Professor Schneckenburger's argument, on page 80—will, I think, account for the origin of proselyte-baptism early in the Christian Era, and for its perpetuation down to the present time. We may now sum up the whole question in the words of Dr. Toy:—

Professor C. H. Toy, D.D.:—Investigation shows that there is positively no evidence of the existence of proselyte-baptism before the destruction of Jerusalem, and that the negative evidence against it up to that time, is as decisive as negative evidence can be; that there are no clear proofs of its existence before the fifth century, while it is possible that it may have been gradually coming into use for a century or two; that there are reasons why the Jews should have been led to adopt some such ceremony after the destruction of Jerusalem; that the form is such as their national observances would suggest; and that the way in which this rite is mentioned is just what we should expect on the supposition that it came into use first about the third century, gradually gaining ground till, in the fifth century, it was firmly established. From these results we conclude that the Christian rite of baptism has no connection with the Jewish initiatory immersion of proselytes.

“From the above arguments, it is clear that Christian-baptism is totally distinct from Jewish proselyte-immersion, which, in fact, originated as an initiatory ceremony, a good while after Christian-baptism had been instituted.

"Therefore, Christian-baptism could not possibly have been borrowed from proselyte-baptism. It is a positive ordinance, instituted, and commanded by our Lord, and perpetually obligatory upon His followers. As to the proper subjects of baptism and the right mode of baptism, the Christian Church, if faithful to her Divine Founder, is bound to be guided solely by the directions which Christ Himself has bequeathed to us in His own words and example, and in the teaching and practice of His inspired apostles, as these are recorded in the New Testament. And as infant-baptism is nowhere enjoined or mentioned in the New Testament, and as all the baptisms recorded in detail therein, without a single exception, are baptisms of professing believers; it is clear to me that infant-baptism is not in accordance with the teaching and the mind of Christ and of His inspired apostles."

A Manly Acknowledgment. "I am much obliged," said Mr. Thorpe, "for the lengthy explanations which you have given; and I candidly confess that I see no way of evading the force of your facts and arguments. I now perceive that the whole subject must be thought out anew; and I promise you that I will do my utmost to give to the question that serious consideration which its importance merits."

CHAPTER XVIII.

INFANT-BAPTISM AND THE GREAT COMMISSION.

ONE evening, when my Teachers' Bible Class had assembled, the senior teacher said:—"There are several other questions, sir, regarding infant-baptism which we should like to bring before you."

"By all means," I replied. "The more difficulties you bring forward, the more shall I be pleased. What is your first question?"

Are people "It is this," answered the teacher. "In made Disciples our Lord's great Commission, He says, 'Go by Baptism? ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.'—Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Now, a Ritualistic friend of mine said to me, the other day, that this passage means that whilst the followers of Christ were to make disciples of 'all the nations,' they were to do this merely by baptizing everybody indiscriminately, infants and adults alike, and regardless of age or character. But I must say that I was astounded at such a strange interpretation."

"You may well call it 'a strange interpretation,'" I responded; "for it is entirely contrary to the whole drift of the New Testament and to the practice of the apostles as recorded therein. If it were generally acted upon, it would soon bring Christianity into universal ridicule and contempt."

"I quite agree with you," said one of the teachers; "for did not baptism, in New Testament times, presuppose a profession of personal discipleship?"

"Most assuredly it did," I answered.

"Then, would you kindly give us your opinion as to what discipleship implies?" asked the superintendent.

What is 1. "Most gladly," I replied. "In regard to
meant by a the followers of John the Baptist, discipleship
Disciple? did not, of course, mean so much as it did
subsequently, in regard to the followers of Christ. But even
in reference to the disciples of John, it was full of signifi-
cance and solemnity. It meant that they had heard and
received his message; had accepted him as a teacher sent
from God; and that they professed repentance of sin, and
a desire for amendment of life. But more than this, it
meant that they were looking forward to the coming of the
Messiah, in accordance with the words:—'John baptized
with the baptism of repentance; saying unto the people,
that they should believe on Him which should come after
him, that is, on Jesus.'—Acts xix. 4.

2. "Christ enlarged and intensified the idea of discipleship.
To be His disciple, was to come to Him with penitence; to
believe on Him as the Messiah and the Redeemer; to follow
Him; to surrender to Him completely; for He demanded
the loyal obedience of the whole heart. How solemn are
His words—'Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not
all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple'!—Luke xiv. 33.

Infants 3. "In ordinary usage, the word 'disciple'
not means—a learner, a scholar, a pupil; but
Disciples. how can an unconscious babe be a pupil, in
regard to matters a knowledge of which implies conscious-
ness and intelligence? In our national system of education,
a child is not viewed as a pupil until he is three years of
age. And, in regard to the Church of Christ, to apply the
term 'disciple' to unconscious babes, is to trifle with one of
the most important words of Scripture. If the children of
believing parents are already disciples of Christ by birth,
what satisfactory reason can be given for sprinkling them
with water, while they are in a state of unconsciousness?
If, on the other hand, they are not disciples by birth; how
can a few drops of water make them disciples?

4. "The word 'disciple' is utterly inapplicable to infants,

It occurs about one hundred times in the New Testament; and I do not know a single instance in which it can fairly be applied to unconscious babes. When used in a Christian sense, it indicates professing believers in Christ; and the New Testament makes no reference to any other class of persons being baptized. Baptism implies a profession of repentance and faith; and it is an act of the 'obedience of faith.' It is, so to speak, the putting on of the Christian uniform—the avowal to the world of allegiance to Christ.

"The *Catechism*, in the Book of Common Prayer, puts this well:—

Question.—What is required of persons to be baptized?

Answer.—*Repentance*, whereby they forsake sin; and *faith*, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament.

"Further, in *The Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants*, we read:—

Baptism doth represent our *profession*; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him.

"And we may well ask, how can an unconscious babe make any profession, or follow Christ's example, or be made like unto Him?"

"But in our Lord's Commission, does not 'teaching' come *after* 'baptizing?'"—asked the senior teacher.

Discipleship 5. "It does," I replied. "But you will ob-
must precede serve that 'making disciples' comes *before*
Baptism. 'baptizing.' And I would ask you to bear in
mind that as it is *disciples* who are to be baptized, that
excludes infants; also, as the persons to be baptized are to
be capable of receiving 'teaching,' infants cannot possibly
be included in our Lord's Commission.

The Order 6. "The order of procedure both with John
of and our Lord was, first, 'making disciples,'
Procedure. and then 'baptizing' them. This we learn
from John iv. 1. The same order is observed in Mark xvi.
16:—'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but

he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.' Faith, which is the grand qualification, and which, of course, implies knowledge and repentance, here precedes baptism.

"The apostles were, first of all, to 'make disciples,' and that of 'all the nations.' That is to say, they were not to confine their labours to the Jews; but were to make disciples of the Gentiles as well. We have seen what discipleship meant; and we can easily see from the Acts of the Apostles that the chief method which they adopted to make disciples was—preaching the gospel.

"Having made disciples, they were then to baptize them. The universal custom, in the days of the apostles, seems to have been that which is mentioned concerning the Christians at Samaria:—"When they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, *both men and women*."—Acts viii. 12. 'Men and women!' Nothing is said, either here or elsewhere in the Scriptures, about the baptism of infants. For they cannot understand the gospel; they cannot repent; they cannot believe. They do not possess the requisite qualifications for discipleship; and, therefore, they have no fitness for the baptism which is a profession of that discipleship."

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"But some who were baptized were not

Common

real disciples," remarked one of the teachers.

Objection.

7. "Quite so," I replied. "But my statement is not controverted by the fact that our Lord distinguished between those who were 'truly' His disciples, and those whose subsequent conduct proved them not to have experienced a change of heart.—John viii. 31. What I want you to observe is this—that the persons baptized by John and the apostles were those who had made a credible profession of discipleship.

8. "Our Lord could never have taught that the apostles were to make disciples of 'all the nations' by merely baptizing them. Such an interpretation of His great Commission would be contrary to the spirit and positive teaching of the New Testament, as well as to the recorded practice

of the apostles themselves. By that interpretation, the baptism of drunkards, fornicators, infidels, and atheists, would be justified; for they also are included in the phrase, 'all the nations.'

9. "There are two uses of 'all' in Scripture, as in everyday speech: *all without exception*, that is, everyone; *all without distinction*, that is, every sort. The latter is the outstanding sense of our Lord's command. The execution of His will imposes upon us the duty of preaching to people without picking and choosing—above all, not confining attention to the Israelitish nation—and of continuing to do so until the entire world is covered with the gospel and its teaching.—Mark xvi. 15.

A Question of Construction. 10. "And, moreover, such an interpretation would not be in accordance with the grammatical construction of the text. The pronoun *them*—*αὐτοὺς*—is in the masculine gender, and is, of course, used collectively; whereas the words, *all the nations*—*πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*—are in the neuter. Therefore, the word 'them' must agree with the noun which is implied in the word *μαθητεύσατε*, which means, *make disciples*. The word implied is, evidently, *μαθητὰς*—*disciples*; 'baptizing *them*,' that is, the *disciples only*. The gospel is intended for 'all the nations'; but only those persons who become 'disciples,' are to be baptized.

"Having made disciples, and baptized them, the apostles were then to teach them all things which their Lord had commanded."

"We thank you, sir," said the senior teacher, "for your exposition of our Lord's Commission; and we should be glad if you would now give us a list of the chief texts relating to baptism, so that we might study them before coming to our next meeting."

The Chief Texts on Baptism. "I am glad," I answered, "that you are going to search the Scriptures, for they are our only guide on this subject; and if you will carefully study and compare the following texts, I think you will come to the same conclusions as myself:—

<i>Matthew</i> xxviii. 18-20.	<i>Acts</i> x. 47, 48.	<i>1 Cor.</i> xii. 13.
<i>Mark</i> xvi. 15, 16.	„ xvi. 14, 15, 31-33.	<i>Gal.</i> iii. 27.
<i>Acts</i> ii. 38, 41.	„ xviii. 8.	<i>Col.</i> ii. 12.
„ viii. 12, 13, 38.	„ xix. 5.	<i>1 Peter</i> iii. 21.
„ ix. 17, 18.	<i>Rom.</i> vi. 3-6.	

A Strange Question. I was just about to conclude the meeting, when the superintendent said, “Pardon me, sir, but I should like to hear your opinion upon another point. It is this:—Supposing that our Lord, instead of saying ‘make *disciples* of all the nations, *baptizing* them, had said, ‘make *proselytes* of all the nations, *circumcising* them. In that case, would not the apostles have understood the Commission to include infants? And if so, why should not the same principle apply, when our Lord commanded baptism, and not circumcision, as the initiatory rite?”

Circumcision and Baptism 11. “Your question is a strange one,” I answered; “and it is based entirely upon essentially a misconception as to the nature and significance of both circumcision and baptism. It is true that the male infants of Jewish proselytes were circumcised. But this teaches us nothing in regard to baptism; for the law of proselytising and circumcising was widely and essentially different from the law of discipling and baptizing. Our Lord taught that, ‘Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’—John iii. 3. In accordance with this law, it was His custom, first of all, to make people disciples, and afterwards to baptize them.—John iv. 1, 2. The apostles evidently acted upon the same principle; for in none of their writings is there the slightest mention of infant-baptism. On the other hand, wherever the Scriptures furnish us with details, a profession of discipleship always precedes baptism.

12. “On some future occasion, I hope to deal at length with the distinctions between Christian-baptism and Jewish circumcision. At present, it is necessary to mention only this one—that while circumcision set the seal of race privilege upon the male children of Jews, and initiated male Gentiles into the Jewish nation, Christian-baptism is

a token or symbol of personal profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a public initiation into His Church without limitation as regards either race or sex.

“You cannot connect circumcision and baptism together so as to argue from one to the other. The new rite of baptism was introduced to meet a totally new state of things, of which circumcision and the whole Old Testament economy were types, to a certain extent. The merely national and ceremonial were to give way to the personal and the spiritual; and in baptism the personal and the spiritual found their appropriate expression. ‘As many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.’—Gal. iii. 27.

Infant-Baptist “Carefully think out these points in pre-Testimonies. paration for our next meeting; and meanwhile, you will be interested in hearing the following testimonies of eminent Infant-Baptists with reference to our Lord’s Commission. You will observe that they entirely confirm the opinions which I have just now expressed.”

Some of the following were then read out to the members of the Class:—

ADAM CLARKE, D.D.:—‘Make disciples of all nations’: bring them to an acquaintance with God, and then baptize them.—*Commentary on Matt. xxviii. 19.*

Archbishop NEWCOME:—I suppose it granted that Jesus could not make disciples without instructing them in the nature of His kingdom.—*Duration of our Lord’s Ministry, p. 58.*

Rev. S. T. BLOOMFIELD, D.D.:—Here we have the great Commission . . . embracing three particulars—(1) to disciple them, or convert them to the faith; (2) to initiate them into the Church by baptism; (3) to instruct them, when baptized, in the doctrines and duties of a Christian life.—*Greek Testament Commentary on Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.*

Professor AGAR BEET, D.D.:—This does not mean, according to the more probable reading, that baptism was to be the method of making disciples; but simply that, while gathering learners for the school of Christ, the apostles were to baptize them, and also to teach them whatever Christ had commanded.—*Christian-Baptism, p. 14.*

Principal DAVID BROWN, D.D., paraphrases the text thus:—Go, conquer the world for Me; carry the glad tidings into all lands, and to every ear; and deem not this work at an end till all nations shall have embraced the gospel and enrolled themselves My disciples. . . . Well, what next? Set the seal of visible discipleship upon the converts by baptizing them . . . teach these baptized members of the Church visible to ‘observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.’—*Commentary on Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.*

Professor W. F. SLATER, M.A.:—It was through the instruction—Matt. xiii. 52—which prepared for baptism that baptism itself came to be called “illumination.” “All the nations” must include both Jews and Gentiles, and receives confirmation in Mark xvi. 15, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.” . . . Baptism was the rite which admitted into the fellowship of believers. The enquirers are first taught, then on believing—Mark xvi. 16—are received into the church. Compare Acts ii. 41; x. 47. After baptism, the office of “teacher” was not in suspense. Paul describes the apostolic practice—Col. i. 28: “admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom.” The condition of baptism in verse 19 is being instructed as disciples; in Mark xvi. 16, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”—*The Century Bible. Comment on Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.*

CHAPTER XIX.

INFANT-BAPTISM NOT PROVED BY THE WORDS—

“BAPTIZED UNTO MOSES.”

At the next meeting of my Teachers' Bible Class, I was just about to enter upon the subject of circumcision, in fulfilment of my promise, when the senior teacher said:—
“There are still several questions, sir, which some of us would like to ask, if you will kindly permit us to do so.”

“Most gladly,” I answered.

Were Infants Included? “Well, then,” began the teacher, “Our first question is this:—Does not St. Paul say, ‘I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, how that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea?’—1 Cor. x. 1, 2. Now, there must have been many infants amongst those who crossed the Red Sea. Do you think, sir, that St. Paul regarded those infants as included among the ‘fathers’ who were baptized?”

“Most certainly not,” I replied. “The apostle cannot have intended to affirm anything concerning the infants; as I think you will allow, if you will bear in mind the following considerations:—

Baptism an Intelligent Act. 1. “If the mere fact of being under the cloud and passing through the sea, *of itself* constituted the baptism, then, of course, the infants would be included in the baptism. But so also would the ‘mixed multitude’ of heathen Egyptians who accompanied them, and also their ‘flocks and herds and very much cattle,’ the wagons, the baggage, and also the dead bones of Joseph which Moses took with him for burial.—Ex. xii. 38; xiii. 19. Surely, this supposition is absurd. The mere fact that infants were carried by their parents across the Red Sea is no proof that they were included amongst the ‘fathers’ who were baptized unto Moses.

And a Religious Act. 2. “We are told by the apostle that those who were baptized ‘did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ. Howbeit, with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.’—1 Cor. x. 3, 4. Surely, no one will say that such words as these could possibly refer to infants.

And an Act of Faith. 3. “Further, in the Epistle to the Hebrews we read, ‘By *faith* they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land.’—Heb. xi. 29. Could infants exercise faith? Most certainly not. How then could they be ‘baptized unto Moses,’ which act implied faith in him as the divinely-appointed deliverer, leader, and law-giver of Israel?

Infants Incapacitated. 4. “Moreover, after this figurative baptism of the crossing of the Red Sea, we read that ‘Israel saw the great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord; and they believed in the Lord, and in His servant Moses.’—Ex. xiv. 31. Could all, or any of these things be said concerning infants? Could they observe this great work of the Lord, and fear the Lord in consequence of it, and believe in the Lord and in His servant Moses?

Only Followers Included. 5. “The whole matter is made clear when we remember that the apostle was not describing in terms of narrative anything that had taken place, but was referring to a well-known incident *under the figure of baptism*. Of course, the figure could only embrace such as were *followers* of Moses—who had definitely accepted his lead. This is enough to prove that the apostle could not have been thinking of *infants* when speaking of ‘our fathers’ who were ‘baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.’”

“It seems clear to me, sir,” said the superintendent, “that the various texts which you have quoted prove that when the apostle said that the ‘fathers of Israel were

all baptized unto Moses,’ he never intended to include their unconscious babes in the baptism, but those only who had arrived at an age of discretion and responsibility. And, in my opinion, there is another argument which points to the same conclusion.”

“What is that?” I asked.

Infants Excluded. 6. “It is this,” answered the superintendent. “Referring to those who had been baptized, the apostle says:—‘Howbeit, with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.’—1 Cor. x. 5. But the reference here must be to adults; for the young children who were carried across the Red Sea were the very ones who afterwards grew up, and went into the promised land. With most of these children God was well pleased; for, with the exception of the children of Dathan and Abiram, they appear to have lived on, and finally to have entered Canaan.”

Infant-Baptist Testimonies. “Your argument appears to me to be sound,” I replied; “and I am pleased to find that your difficulties are gradually being removed. I will ask you to postpone your other questions till our next meeting. Meanwhile, I would draw your attention to some further testimonies of eminent Infant-Baptists”:

Dr. MACKNIGHT:—All were baptized into the *belief* of Moses’ Divine Mission.—*Comment on 1 Cor. x. 2.*

JOHN WESLEY:—*And were all, as it were, baptized unto Moses—initiated into the religion which he taught them.*—*Notes on 1 Cor. x. 2.*

Dr. D. DAVIDSON:—*Baptized unto Moses; that is—declared their belief in his doctrine, and entire submission to him as their prophet, guide, and ruler, whom God had appointed them.*—*Comment on 1 Cor. x. 2.*

Dean ALFORD:—*Received baptism to Moses; entered by the act of such immersion into a solemn covenant with God . . . just as we Christians by our baptism are bound in a solemn covenant with God.*—*Greek Testament on 1 Cor. x. 2.*

Canon TEIGNMOUTH SHORE:—Moses was God’s representative under the Law; and they were baptized unto him in their

voluntarily joining with that "Church" of God which marched beneath the shadow of the cloud, and passed through the waters of the sea.—*Ellicott's New Testament Commentary. Note on 1 Cor. x. 2.*

Dr. ALBERT BARNES:—We are not to suppose that the rite of baptism, as we understand it, was formally administered by Moses, or by any other person, to the Jews; for there is not the least evidence that any such rite was then known. It means that they were thus . . . initiated into his religion, and thus recognized his Divine Mission, and bound themselves to obey his injunctions.—*Comment on 1 Cor. x. 2.*

Professor J. MASSIE, M.A., D.D.:—The Greek word means "gave themselves to baptism;" it was not compulsory. So much the worse was their apostasy afterwards. The baptism is here purely figurative; the elements are a fiery cloud above them, and a dry sea-bed beneath them. Their action was the sign and seal of trust in their leader.—*The Century Bible. Comment on 1 Cor. x. 2.*

Professor JOHN ALBERT BENGEL:—They were baptized in the cloud, in so far as they went under it; and in the sea in so far as they passed through it. . . . The cloud and the sea took them out of sight and restored them, much in the way in which water does those who are baptized. . . . They were baptized unto Moses as the servant of God—Exodus xiv. 31—both because they had begun to have faith in him, and in order that henceforth they might have faith in him. Compare *eis*, in, Rom. iv. 20.—*Gnomon of the New Testament. Comment on 1 Cor. x. 2.*

CHAPTER XX.

INFANT-BAPTISM NOT SANCTIONED BY THE WORDS—

“TO YOU AND TO YOUR CHILDREN.”

“WHAT is your explanation, sir, of Acts ii. 39?” asked one of the teachers, at the following meeting of my Bible Class.

“This text,” I replied, “is frequently quoted by the advocates of infant-baptism as if it told in their favour. In my opinion, it tells against them, as I think you will readily perceive.

Not Baptism 1. “The ‘promise’ here specified does but the not refer to baptism at all, but to the out-Effusion of pouring of the Holy Spirit. This is proved the Spirit. by the words of St. Peter, in the sixteenth verse of the same chapter, in which he refers to Joel ii. 28, 29, for the words of the promise:—‘And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.’ This ‘promise’ makes no mention of baptism; and, in my judgment, it refers to the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost, and to all those spiritual blessings which that gift implies.

Posterity, not Infants. 2. “The word ‘children’ in this passage evidently means *descendants*, or *posterity*. This is often its meaning in the Scriptures. For instance—we read of ‘The children of Cain,’ ‘The children of Seth,’ ‘The children of Abraham,’ ‘The children of Israel,’ ‘The children of the Prophets.’ Clearly, these ‘children’ were not unconscious infants; but the descendants, or posterity, of the persons alluded to. The apostle’s words here, simply mean that the ‘promise’ of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was applicable not only to those to whom he was speaking, but also to their posterity, ‘and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto

Him.' That is to say, the 'promise' is a general one; and all who comply with its conditions may claim its blessings. The 'call' here referred to, is either the outward call of the gospel; or the inward call of the Spirit; or both: and it implies consciousness and intelligence in those to whom it is addressed, and who are expected to respond to it. Therefore, it excludes infants.

Not Babes, 3. "The passage evidently refers to *be-*
but Believers. *lievers*. In the 'promise' as given by the prophet Joel, the 'children' mentioned by the apostle are thus referred to:—'I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.' If, then, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, they were to be able to prophesy, they must have been believers; and, therefore, could not have been infants.

"For further instances of the use of the word rendered 'children'—τέκνα—either in the sense of *posterity*, or *adults*, see Matt. x. 21; xxiii. 37; Mark x. 24; John viii. 39; Acts xiii. 33; Romans viii. 16, 17; 2 Cor. vi. 13; xii. 14; 1 Peter i. 14; 2 Peter ii. 14; 2 John 4, 13. We have the same form of speech amongst ourselves to-day. How often we have heard parents speaking of their 'children'; when, in fact, those children were not only adults, but married, and were even the heads of families.

Repentance 4. "When the people heard the preaching
Precedes of the apostle, they were 'pricked in their
Baptism. heart,' and said—'Brethren, what shall we do?' Peter replied by exhorting them to '*repent and be baptized*;' and we are told that '*They that received his word were baptized*.'—Acts ii. 41. Thus, we find that those who heard the gospel, repented, believed, and then confessed their faith in baptism. And the teaching of the apostle, in the verse under consideration, seems to be this—that not only those to whom he was speaking, but their posterity also, and the people of the Gentiles as well, might all alike receive the 'promise' of the Spirit, by obedience to the inspired command: 'Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of

your sins.' The passage, therefore, in my judgment, instead of supporting infant-baptism, excludes it, by teaching the baptism of believers.

Grace not Transmitted. 5. "Nor is there any evidence to prove that the 'promise' here mentioned is a promise of the admission of infants into the covenant of grace, on account of the faith of their godly parents. It is a great privilege, and, therefore, a great responsibility, to have a godly parentage; and under the Old Testament economy, those who possessed this privilege reaped great temporal, and even religious, advantages as a result of it. But there is no passage of Scripture which teaches that any children, at any time, have entered the covenant of grace and enjoyed such spiritual blessings as regeneration, conversion, justification, and holiness, *on account of their parents' faith*. Nor is there any promise in Scripture to that effect."

"We thank you, sir, for your explanation," said the superintendent; "and you may rely upon our giving it our prayerful consideration."

Infant-Baptist Testimonies. I then concluded the meeting by giving the following testimonies of Infant-Baptists:--

Dr. HAMMOND:—I think . . . that the word *children* there—Acts ii. 39—is really the posterity of the Jews, and not their infant children.—*Works*, vol. i., p. 490.

Dr. WHITBY:—These words will not prove a right of infants to receive baptism; the "promise" mentioned here being that of the Holy Ghost.—*Annotations on Acts ii. 38, 39*.

Professor NEANDER:—The *promise* related to all *believers* without distinction, even to all in distant parts of the world, whom God by His grace should lead to *believe* in Jesus as the Messiah.—*History of the Planting of the Christian Church*, p. 19.

Dr. ALBERT BARNES:—On the words—"To you and your children"—he quotes Isa. xlv. 3; and lix. 21; and then says—In these and similar places their *descendants* and *posterity* are denoted. It does not refer to children *as children*, and should not be adduced to establish the propriety of infant-baptism.—*Comment on Acts ii. 38, 39*.

Dr. DODDRIDGE:—With regard to the "promise," he says—Considering that the gift of the Spirit has been mentioned just before, it seems most natural to interpret this as a reference to that passage in Joel which had been so largely cited above, where God promised the effusion of the Spirit on their sons and their daughters.—*Exposition of Acts ii. 38—41*.

CHAPTER XXI.

INFANT-BAPTISM NOT WARRANTED BY THE WORDS—

“HOLY CHILDREN.”

At the next meeting of my Teachers' Bible Class, the senior teacher said:—"There is one difficulty which a friend has brought to my notice since last we met. It is this:—Does not the apostle Paul, in 1 Cor. vii. 12—14, teach that when either a father or mother becomes a Christian, their children are 'holy'? And does not the holiness of such children show that the apostle considered them entitled to baptism?"

"The fact," I replied, "is as you state; but the inference from that fact is unwarrantable. For—

Not Baptism, 1. "The apostle, in this passage, is dealing with marriage. The fact is, that some of

Marriage. the Corinthians who had been converted were in a great difficulty. Christian wives found themselves, at the time of their conversion, married to Pagan husbands. On the other hand, Christian husbands were married to Pagan wives. This state of things led the believing Corinthians to ask—"Is it lawful for us to continue to live with our unbelieving spouses?" That this was the subject upon which the apostle was writing is evident from the advice which he gives in the twelfth and thirteenth verses.

"The Old Testament—as they had probably learnt—forbade Israelites to marry heathen.—Deut. vii. 3. And Ezra and Nehemiah constrained certain Jews, who had married heathen women, to put them away.—Ezra ix. 1—14; Neh. xiii. 23—25. The apostle also taught that believers were to marry only in the Lord.—1 Cor. vii. 39; 2 Cor. vi. 14. Hence, it was almost inevitable that the question referred to should arise in the minds of the Corinthian Christians. The apostle combats their scruples, and advises them to continue to live together. 'For,' says

he, ‘the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother ; else were your children unclean ; but now they are holy.’

Not Spiritual Holiness. 2. “This cannot mean that an unbelieving wife, or husband, possessed *spiritual holiness* ; for in that case, the apostle’s teaching would be that a person could be spiritually holy, and yet remain an infidel, or a heathen, at the same time.

Not Federal Holiness. 3. “Nor would the faith of one, or both, parents render their *children* holy in a *federal* sense. This idea of federal holiness is utterly unknown to the Scriptures. No one can repent or believe for another. It is evident, therefore, that the words ‘sanctified,’ or ‘holy’—for these words mean the same thing—must be understood in a *relative* sense. To argue that the word *ἅγιος*—here translated ‘holy,’ and sometimes translated ‘saint’—usually implies the fact of baptism, and indicates a title to it, is utterly erroneous. The word is often used in a *ceremonial* sense, and is even applied to inanimate objects, when they are set apart to a religious purpose. Hence, we read of the ‘holy place,’ the ‘holy city,’ the ‘holy ground,’ the ‘holy oil,’ the ‘holy vessels,’ the ‘holy garments.’ But were these places and things other than ceremonially ‘holy?’ Or is anything said in the New Testament to show that such holiness would entitle to baptism? To answer these questions in the affirmative would sanction many superstitious observances of Romanists, who bless and sprinkle bells, candles, banners—yea, even horses, when ready to rush upon the racecourse!

Relative Holiness. 4. “Under the Law, persons and things were regarded as relatively ‘sanctified,’ or ‘holy,’ when they were set apart to, and used for, a divinely-appointed purpose. As the apostle Paul says to Timothy :—‘Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving ; for it is *sanctified* through the Word of God and prayer.’—1 Tim. iv. 4—5 On the other hand, amongst the Jews, persons and things which a holy person might not lawfully touch,

or use, or associate with, were accounted relatively unclean.

“When, therefore, we read of the unbelieving husband, or wife, being ‘sanctified in’—or in relation to—the believing partner, we are to understand the apostle to mean that in spite of the unbelief of one of the parties, their matrimony was lawful; that they were sanctified, or set apart, to each other as husband and wife, and that their living together in this relationship was pleasing to God. ‘If it were not so,’ the apostle seems to teach; ‘if you were unclean to each other—not fit to associate together as husband and wife—your children would also be unclean to you, and you would have to put them away; but now are they holy; that is to say, legitimate and clean to you; so that you may retain them in your homes as objects of your affection and care.’ They were holy also in the sense of privilege and opportunity.

Baptism 5. “It will thus be evident that these

Barred. verses have *no reference to infants, as such*; but only to the children that were the offspring of such unions as the apostle was referring to. And the words would apply equally as well to *grown-up* sons and daughters, even when those sons and daughters were living in unbelief. It is evident, therefore, that if the infant children of such unions had a right to be baptized because they were relatively holy, so also would the unbelieving parents and their grown-up children have the same right; for they were all likewise relatively holy. The unbelieving parents and the ‘holy children’—whether infants or adults—stood exactly upon the same ground. And the unbelieving parents referred to were certainly not baptized.

The Children 6. “There is not the remotest allusion

Unbaptized. to the children being proper subjects of baptism, any more than their unbelieving parents. What ground, then, is there for anyone inferring that these children were baptized? There is none whatever. Indeed, the more these verses are studied, the more clearly, I think, it will appear that they give no support to infant-baptism; and that they indicate that at the time the apostle wrote,

infant-baptism was unknown in the Corinthian church. Had it been otherwise, the apostle would have inferred the holiness of children from their *baptism*, instead of from their having a Christian father or mother."

Infant-Baptist Testimonies. The following opinions of Infant-Baptists amply corroborate the explanation which I have just given :—

Professor AGAR BEET, D.D. :—We must admit that the children referred to here were unbaptized.—*Comment on 1 Cor. vii. 14.*

Dean STANLEY :—This passage is conclusive against the practice of infant-baptism in the apostolic age.—*Contemporary Review*, 1879, p. 700.

Professor NEANDER :—This passage "testifies against the existence of infant-baptism" when Paul wrote.—*History of the Planting of the Christian Church*, vol. i., p. 165.

Dr. R. HAWKER :—"Holy"—that is, are born in holy wedlock. And this is all that is, or can, be meant by it, as relating to the common circumstances of human life.—*Comment on 1 Cor. vii. 14.*

Professor OLSHAUSEN :—It is, moreover, clear that St. Paul could not have chosen this line of argument, had infant-baptism been at that time practised.—*Comment on 1 Cor. vii. 14.*

Dr. ALBERT BARNES :—There is not one word about baptism here; not an allusion to it: nor does the argument, in the remotest degree, bear upon it.—*Comment on 1 Cor. vii. 14.*

Professor JACOBI :—A pretty sure indication of the non-existence of infant-baptism in the apostolic age may be inferred from 1 Cor. vii. 14; since Paul would certainly have referred to the baptism of children for their holiness.—*Kitto's Cyclopædia*, Article, *Baptism*.

Professor MOSES STUART :—It cannot mean that children are made the proper subjects of baptism; for if this were the case, then the unbelieving husband, or wife, would be made so by the believing party. Further, such a sense would be inapposite to the course of reasoning.

Professor GUSTAV BILLROTH :—This verse has, even from the earliest times, been variously explained; and the general want of success in such attempts is to be traced to this, that interpreters have dragged into their explanations a subject of which there are no traces in the text, namely, baptism, and so have impeded themselves with unnecessary difficulties.—*Comment on 1 Cor. vii. 14*

CHAPTER XXII.

INFANT-BAPTISM NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE SUPPOSED IDENTITY OF ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH.

WHEN my Bible Class had once more assembled, I commenced the conversation by saying: "I dare say you have sometimes heard Infant-Baptists speak as follows:—'The Church of the Old Testament was the same as the Church of the New Testament. The infant children of the Israelites were included in the former; therefore, all the infant children of believers have a right to be included in the latter. And as Israelitish infants received the rite of circumcision as a sign of Church-membership; so the infant children of members of the New Testament Church ought to have the privilege of receiving the rite of baptism as a sign that they also are members of the Church.'"

"I am glad, sir, that you have mentioned that point," said the superintendent; "for I met with it in my reading only yesterday."

No Church 1. "Well," I responded, "the answer is not before Christ. difficult. The fact is, there never was any organised body of believers in the Old Testament dispensation, which at all corresponded to the Christian Church. When modern scholars employ the term 'Church' in reference to the times of the Old Testament, they inform us that it applies exclusively to the period of the Exile, and afterwards:—

Professor SCHULTZ:—By the men of the Exile this people is afterwards called 'the assembly,' 'the congregation' of God . . . Prior to the monarchy, the term used will have been 'tribes,' afterwards 'people,' and, in the Exile, 'congregation' of Jehovah.—*Old Testament Theology*, vol. ii. p. 8.

Professor ROBERTSON SMITH, L.L.D.:—Referring to the small circle of godly men who gathered around Isaiah, he says—The formation of this little community was a new thing in the history of religion Till then, no one had dreamed of a fellowship of faith dissociated from all national forms, maintained without the exercise of ritual services, bound together by faith in the divine word alone It was the birth of a new era in the Old Testament

religion; for it was the birth of the conception of the *Church*, the first step in the emancipation of spiritual religion from the forms of political life—a step not less significant that all its consequences were not seen till centuries had passed away. The community of true religion and the political community of Israel had never before been separated even in thought: now they stood side by side, conscious of their mutual antagonism, and never again fully to fall back into their old identity.—*The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 274, 275.

When did the Church originate? 2. “When do we first read of professedly regenerate men and women being formed into churches?”—asked one of the teachers.

“Not until we come to New Testament times,” I answered; “and I would ask you to notice that the members of these churches are addressed and referred to by the apostles as ‘believers,’ ‘saints,’ ‘the children of God,’ ‘joint heirs with Christ,’ etc.; but not a single word is said about the Church-membership of infants.”

What is the Church? 3. “What is the actual meaning of the word ‘Church,’ as employed in the New Testament?”—enquired the superintendent.

“The word rendered ‘Church’ in the New Testament,” I replied, “is *ἐκκλησία*, which means a body of people assembled in response to a *call* or *summons*. Hence, those who form the Church are spoken of as ‘called,’ ‘elect,’ ‘chosen’—all terms agreeable to the solemn significance of the word as applied to New Testament realities.

“The few instances in which *ἐκκλησία* is used in reference to Israel are in general harmony with this; for they view the people as *chosen* of God for special privileges, or as forming a family or congregation.

“In no deep or essential respect, however, is the Commonwealth of Israel the same as the Church of the New Testament; therefore, any inference drawn from the supposed identity must fall to the ground.

A Spiritual Society. 4 “The word ‘Church’ is used in two senses. Sometimes it means *any society of Christians*, united in faith, and *meeting in one place*, for the worship of God and the promotion of growth in grace. Thus we read of—‘the Churches of Christ’; ‘the Churches

of Asia'; 'the Churches of Galatia'; 'the Churches of Macedonia.' But, further, sometimes the word stands for *the whole body of believers*.—1 Cor. x. 32; Gal. i. 13. The New Testament knows of only one universal Church, which consists of those who are exercising true faith in Christ as their personal Saviour, and of none other. Israel was the whole *nation*, consisting of people irrespective of their moral and religious character: but the Church is a purely spiritual society. And the apostle Paul commanded the church at Corinth even to expel from their midst an unworthy member.—1 Cor. v. 12, 13. Considering these circumstances, it is evident that there is no parallel between the national Commonwealth of Israel, and the spiritual Church of Jesus Christ."

"Parallel!" exclaimed the superintendent. "If what you say is correct, they are as different as light is from darkness."

An Absolute Contrast. 5. "Indeed, they are," I replied. "And you will observe that the New Testament makes a sharp distinction between the *national* and the *spiritual* Israel, as between an outer and an inner circle.—Matt. iii. 7—9; John viii. 37, 39, 44; Gal. iii. 7, 29. The outer circle was involuntary, racial, and national; and, of course, it included infants. The inner circle was voluntary, personal, and spiritual; and it was entered by an act of faith, of which infants were incapable. The national, doubtless, foreshadowed the spiritual; and it was intended as a type of the New Testament Church. The type was an indication of separation to God *nationally*. The antitype was the Church itself—redeemed, separated to Christ *spiritually*, repudiating the idea of national religion, and claiming no alliance with the State, or with any secular authorities whatsoever. Hence, its Divine Founder, when before the bar of Pilate, said: 'My kingdom is not of this world.'—John xviii. 36. In the New Testament, the Church is called 'the Church of God,' 'the Church of Christ,' 'the Church *in* God,' 'the Body of Christ,' and 'the Bride' of Christ. Its members are described as 'in Christ,' and 'a New Creation.'

A National Commonwealth. “In fact, the Commonwealth of Israel consisted of all the *natural descendants* of Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob—whether they were good or bad—and of Gentile proselytes. But no one is entitled to membership of the Church, unless he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and has been begotten of the Holy Ghost.—John i. 12, 13; xiv. 16. 1 Cor. ii. 12; iii. 16. Ephes. i. 12, 13. Col. i. 3, 4, 8; ii. 10—13. 2 Tim. i. 9. Titus iii. 4—6. James i. 18. 1 Peter ii. 5—7. Israelites were not circumcised into the Commonwealth, as some seem to suppose; but born into it by natural birth. The New Testament Church, on the other hand, is a spiritual society, taken out of all nations; and its members are admitted into it by a spiritual birth.—Acts xv. 14. This distinction is vital and absolute.”

An Illustration. 6. “We may easily see the contrast between the national and the spiritual, by looking at our own country, in which Christianity is the national or State-religion. Every citizen is *born a member of the National Church*; and is, therefore, entitled to its religious privileges. Yet no one is saved by so-called *national* religion, but by a personal faith in Christ. And so it was with Israel, God’s chosen people. As St. Paul says: ‘They are not *all* Israel, which are of Israel.’—Rom. ix. 6. That is to say, they were not all *spiritual* Israel, which were of the *national* Israel. Therefore, to compare the national Commonwealth of Israel with the spiritual Church of Christ, as described in the New Testament, is to confound the shadow with the substance, the type with the antitype, the racial and national with the personal and spiritual, the outward with the inward, the flesh with the spirit, ‘the form of godliness’ with ‘the power thereof.’

“God dwelt *among* His national Israel: He dwells *within* His spiritual people. He was then the national *King* of Israel: He is now the spiritual *Father* of all His believing children, out of every nation under heaven. Israel was His Theocracy: the Church is His ‘bride.’ He *commanded* holiness from Israel under the law: He now *bestows* it upon His disciples, by His Spirit, under the gospel.

Nation versus Church. "When once this distinction between the Israelitish nation and the Christian Church is clearly understood, it will be evident that it is meaningless as well as incongruous to speak of 'the church-standing of infants under the Old Testament dispensation.' They never had any such standing. There never was an Old Testament 'Church,' taking the word in its full New Testament meaning. Israelitish infants, therefore, could not have been included in that which had no existence.

Infant-Baptist Testimonies. "The following testimonies of eminent Infant-Baptists amply confirm my statements"—

Dr. E. DE PRESSENSE:—A *new society* was founded, under the name of the Church, whose bond of union was love and faith, and which was recruited from among all people and among all ranks. This was the new humanity, the normal society, into which admission was not acquired by right of birth or by any purely external sign, but by the new birth—that is to say, by adhesion of the heart and conscience.—*The Religions Before Christ*, p. 261.

Dr. STOUGHTON:—A Christian Church, in some of its most essential points, was, after all, a perfectly new institute, in immeasurable advance of anything which the Jews before had witnessed, or been taught to conceive . . . The Jewish Church was in certain respects, and those the most characteristic and most striking, so utterly different from the Churches instituted by the apostles, that a combination of the principles of the first, with the principles of the second, is simply impossible . . . It is a question, not of modification, but of revolution; as we see at once when we compare the principal features of the one, with what were the prominent marks of the other.—*Ages of Christendom*, p. 37. *Ecclesia*, p. 20.

Rev. G. A. JACOB, D.D—From the very circumstances of the case there could be no such thing as a "national church" in the apostolic period. National churches, however justifiable and desirable in certain periods of national life, are not divine or apostolic institutions. Their propriety rests altogether on the ground of general expediency, and public advantage; and to attempt to furnish them with a higher sanction by arguments drawn from the theocratic government of the Jewish people seems to me to savour but little of sound reasoning, and to confound together some of the distinctive characteristics of two widely different dispensations.—*The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament*, p. 9, note.

CHAPTER XXIII.

INFANT-BAPTISM NOT WARRANTED BY THE SUPPOSED CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP OF CHILDREN.

At the next meeting of my Bible Class, I spoke as follows:—
“Those of you who were present when last we met, will remember that I shewed that under the Old Testament dispensation, there was no institution corresponding to the Church of the New Testament. There was a national Commonwealth; and, of course, Israelitish infants were included in that Commonwealth, merely on account of their natural birth. I shewed also that the original conditions of membership in the Christian Church were repentance and faith, of which infants were incapable.”

Were Children “But, coming to New Testament times,”
Members of interrupted the superintendent, “do we
the Church? not find that the apostles, in their Epistles, addressed children as *members of the Church*? Were these children infants? And if so, does not their church-membership prove that they had been baptized?”

Possibly 1. “The answer to these questions is very
they were. obvious,” I replied. “The children addressed by the apostles *may* have been church-members; and if they were, they had, I doubt not, been baptized. If they were not church-members, they were certainly of the Christian circle, as our Sunday scholars are to-day, and were, therefore, amenable to instruction on the lines laid down by the apostle. The early Christians were very careful in the training of their children; and, doubtless, many young people, who were not as yet church-members, benefited by the godly counsels of the apostle.

Not 2. “But, these children *could not have*
Unconscious *been infants*; for the apostles gave to them
Infants. certain commands which imply that they were able to understand and obey. For instance: ‘Children,

obey your parents in the Lord : for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise ; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.'—Eph. vi. 1, 2. Again, we read : 'Children, obey your parents in all things ; for this is well pleasing in the Lord.'—Col. iii. 20. Surely, the apostle never addressed these commands to unconscious babes !

But Children of Intelligence. 3. "Moreover, observe the exhortations which the apostle addresses to the *fathers of these children* :—'Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, that they be not discouraged : but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.'—Col. iii. 21 ; Eph. vi. 4. Did these fathers need to be warned against provoking their little babes ? Could unconscious infants be 'discouraged ?' It is evident that the 'children' here referred to had arrived at years of understanding, and were what we should term 'young people,' who had, in all probability, given themselves to Christ.

Young Converts. 4. "As to the whole of the passages in the New Testament, in which the words 'children,' 'little children,' 'babes,' and 'lambs' occur—with the exception of Mark x. 13—16, and its parallels—it will be found, on a close examination of each passage, that it has no reference to infants *as such*, or to the question of their baptism.—Matt. xx. 20 ; xviii. 1—6, 10, 14. It either denotes those who had been recently converted to Christ, irrespective of age—1 Tim. i. 2 ; Titus i. 4 ; John xxi. 15 ; 1 Peter ii. 2 ; or else young persons who were capable of understanding the gospel, who had accepted it, and who, if they had been admitted to church-membership, had evidently been baptized.—Eph. vi. 1—4 ; Col. iii. 21 ; 1 John ii. 18 ; 2 John 1—4 ; 3 John 4.

An Absurd Contention. 5. "To argue, as some do, that unconscious babes are more fit for admission into the Church than the generality of grown-up Christians, is to reduce the Church to an absurdity. Christ tenderly loved little children ; and His followers should love them too, and should dedicate them to Him from their very infancy.

But he never intended His Church to be divorced from intelligence, responsibility, and faith.

Why not 6. "Moreover, if infants are qualified for **Communicants?** baptism on account of their parents' faith, or in expectation of the development of their own faith, or on account of some supposed church-standing, why not allow them to become communicants? Surely they are as fit for one Ordinance as for the other. When infant-baptism first appeared in North Africa in the third century, infant-communion also came into practice along with it. In the Western Churches infant-communion continued until the twelfth century. It is still the custom of the whole Greek Church; and, in my judgment, there is just as much to be said for infant-communion as for infant-baptism. One is as incongruous as the other. Happily, no evangelical denomination in this country practises infant-communion. But the very arguments which prevent them from doing so, would, if consistently applied, compel them to discontinue infant-baptism.

Not 7. "It should be borne in mind that the **Adult-Baptism** Scriptures do not teach *adult*-baptism, but **but Believers'-** *believer's*-baptism. It is a mistake to speak **Baptism.** of 'adult-baptism'; for the phrase seems to imply that mere maturity of years is a qualification for that rite. The only qualification for baptism is *faith*, which always implies repentance. And I see no reason why children of even tender years—if they give credible evidence of intelligent faith in Jesus—should not confess that faith in baptism, and be admitted to the Communion Table of their Lord. The late Rev. C. H. Spurgeon baptized many such young disciples, who afterwards became the most devoted supporters of his ministry. Such disciples should not only be admitted to the fellowship of the churches, but should be viewed as their special treasure; although they ought not to be permitted to take part in the business of their church, until they have reached years of maturity."

CHAPTER XXIV.

INFANT-BAPTISM NOT SUPPORTED BY FAMILY SOLIDARITY IN ISRAEL.

AT the next meeting of my Bible Class, one of the teachers asked me how I met the argument for infant-baptism which is adduced from the Israelitish idea of family unity or solidarity. I gave the following answer:—

The Unity of the Family. “It is argued that as, under the Abrahamic covenant of circumcision, *an infant was held to be one with his parents*, and, therefore, was circumcised; so, in accordance with this principle, a Christian Jew, in the apostolic age, would expect that, under the new and better covenant, his children would be entitled to baptism along with himself. It is also contended that this principle of the unity of the family applies both to Jew and Gentile alike; and that it makes the ‘household-baptisms’ of Scripture decisive, in favour of infant-baptism. That these objections are erroneous, will, I think, be seen from the following considerations:—

The Principle cannot be Limited. 1. “The principle referred to *cannot be limited to infants*. It must be applicable to the whole family, whether adults or infants, and irrespective of age or character, as was the case with circumcision; or else it cannot be legitimately pleaded as applicable to any part of the family. If a Jewish or a heathen family was entitled to be baptized, simply because its head had become a Christian; in that case, not only the *infants*, but also the *adult members* of the family would be entitled to baptism on the same ground; that is, on the ground of the parent’s faith—even though these adults might, at the very time, be living in unbelief and in open sin, yea, even in idolatry itself! Surely, this is a *reductio ad absurdum*.

The Principle not Applicable. 2. "Further, the principle of family solidarity is not applicable to the *spiritual relationship* which is symbolised by Christian-baptism. What is the principle? It is that of natural birth and blood-relationship only: and it distinguished the Old Testament covenants generally. For instance, Adam was the covenant-head of the human race. Noah, in a sense, was the covenant-head of that race after the flood. Abraham was the covenant-head of the Hebrew people. Moses was the covenant-head of the Israelitish nation, regarded as under the Sinaitic Law. David was the covenant-head of the family of which the Messiah was to be born. And every Israelitish father may, possibly, have been regarded as the covenant-head of his family. But what was the connecting link between each several head and its members? I repeat—it was that of *natural birth and blood-relationship only*. Yet it must be borne in mind that all these headships may rightly be regarded as typical of the headship of Christ, and of the spiritual relationship existing between Himself and His disciples, as a result of their *spiritual birth* into the covenant of grace.

Natural, and Spiritual Birth. 3. "It is true, then, that an Israelitish infant was looked upon as *one with his parents* in the Hebrew Commonwealth, on account of his natural birth and blood-relationship, and that, as such, he received the rite of circumcision, the token of the Abrahamic covenant. But only those are spiritual sons of God, qualified for membership in the Christian Church and fit subjects for baptism, who have believed in Jesus Christ, and have become 'a new creation' in Him.—2 Cor. v. 17.

A Fundamental Question. 4. "But when every reasonable concession has been made, we are entitled to ask, Was family solidarity in Israel any more real than family solidarity among Christians? It depends upon the family itself—what sort of Israelites, and what sort of Christians. There were loose Israelites as well as loose Christians. If we deal with ideal families, well; if not, there is no case worth arguing. Given ideal families; then

Christian solidarity is all that Israelitish solidarity ever could have been. Circumcision, however, as we shall see by and by, was a family affair: it was racial. Baptism is not a family affair. it is dependent on relation to Christ. There is no natural analogy for the spiritual experience of being *born again*, 'not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh . . . but of God.'"—John i. 13.

How Jews are Misled. 5. "As the Jews still pride themselves upon being the descendants of Abraham, and as they are often grossly ignorant of the spiritual teaching of circumcision, and of the covenant of which it was the 'token'; it is not unnatural that when some of them become Christians, they should imagine that on that account, their families, whether infants or adults, are entitled to baptism.

The Teaching they Require. "But when the spirituality of the New Testament dispensation has been clearly expounded to them; they see that people are not 'added to the Lord' as *families*, but as *individuals*; in accordance with the testimony of Scripture, which informs us that—'Believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.'—Acts v 14. And when they discover that the oneness of a child with its parents under the covenant of circumcision, did not secure for him the spiritual life which the *godly* members of that covenant possessed, but was only a type of the spiritual oneness between Christ and His followers; then they easily understand that the 'household-baptisms' of Scripture were not baptisms of unconscious babes, but of believers, who thus confessed their faith in Christ, and their spiritual oneness with Him, as their Lord and Master. Hence it is that many such Jews are publicly immersed, and join the Baptist denomination."

"We thank you, sir," said one of the teachers, "for so clearly expressing your views; and we should be glad if you would, on some future occasion, go more fully into the discussion of the Abrahamic covenants and of circumcision."

"This I will endeavour to do," I responded, "at our next meeting."

CHAPTER XXV.

IS INFANT-BAPTISM CHRISTIAN-CIRCUMCISION?

IN view of the importance and delicacy of the subject of circumcision, I convened a special meeting of the male members of my Teachers' Bible Class, in order to consider it. When we were assembled, I introduced the question in the following manner :—

The Question stated. “Many Infant-Baptists contend that the baptism of infants under the New Testament dispensation, was the divinely-appointed substitute for circumcision; and they affirm, therefore, that baptism, in reality, is Christian-circumcision.”

“How do you account for Infant-Baptists calling baptism Christian-circumcision?” asked one of the teachers.

“It arises,” I replied, “from their not interpreting rightly the signification of circumcision and the circumstances under which it was originally introduced.”

An Erroneous Question. “Was it not first commanded to Abraham as part of the covenant of grace?” asked the superintendent.

The Eight Abrahamic Covenants. 1. “No,” I replied. “It was distinct from that covenant, and was instituted long after the covenant of grace was revealed to Abraham. This will, I think, be clear to you if you remember that God made eight covenants with Abraham.

The Meaning of Covenant. “It is important to bear in mind that the original word occurs about three hundred times in the Old Testament; that it is rendered ‘covenant’ in the Authorised Version, with a few exceptions; but that it has a variety of meanings.

Professor A. B. DAVIDSON, D.D. :—The word is used in a variety of significations, appearing to mean not only covenant, but also appointment, ordinance, law; and opinions differ on the question what its primary meaning is.—*Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. i. p. 509.

A Common Error. "It is a common error to speak of the 'Abrahamic covenant'; as if God had made only *one* covenant with Abraham. For we know that St. Paul not only speaks of 'covenants' and 'promises,' but of the 'covenants of the promise,' as appertaining to the Israelites.—Rom. ix. 4; Gal. iv. 24; Eph. ii. 12.

Dr. T. R. PALMER:—This language will perhaps justify the inference that the Jews, by natural inheritance, possessed certain unconditional promises to which God had given the name and rank of covenants.—*Baptist Quarterly*, vol. v. p. 316.

The Covenants Described. "The eight Abrahamic covenants, or 'covenants of the promise,' may, for convenience sake, be described as follows:—
The Covenant of Grace. (1.) "The first covenant was the *personal and spiritual covenant of grace*. This covenant was first made with Abraham when he was in Ur of the Chaldees, and while he was still 'in uncircumcision.' It is recorded in Genesis xii. 1—3. In order clearly to understand this covenant, you will require to read the inspired comments upon it, as given in Ephesians ii. 12; Acts iii. 25, 26; Galatians iii. 8—17; and Hebrews vi. 13—19. This covenant, while it included certain blessings and honours of a temporal nature, conferred great spiritual blessings upon the patriarch and upon all his believing seed. As St. Paul says, it 'preached beforehand the gospel unto Abraham.'—Gal. iii. 8. It granted to him justification through faith, on account of the Messiah's merits.—Gen. xv. 6; John viii. 56; Gal. iii. 9. It constituted him the head of a mighty nation. It made him the father of a numerous spiritual seed, which should possess like faith with himself, and which should be as the stars of heaven for multitude.—Gen. xv. 5. Through his natural seed the whole world was to be spiritually blessed. Yea, the Saviour of men would be his lineal descendant; and all believers, Jew and Gentile alike, would be accounted as 'Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise.'—Gal. iii. 29.

"As this covenant corresponded in substance with the new covenant, or the covenant of grace, no room was found in it for circumcision, with its racial application and social meaning. Hence, in connection with this first Abrahamic covenant, circumcision was not even so much as mentioned.

The Covenant of the Inheritance. (2.) "The second covenant is *the national covenant of the inheritance*. It is recorded in Genesis xii. 7. In this covenant, God promised to Abraham that to his seed he would give the land of Canaan.

The Covenant of Posterity. (3.) "The third covenant was *the national covenant of a numerous posterity*. Abraham's seed was to be multitudinous—'as the dust of the earth.' And to him and his seed was the land of Canaan given.—Gen. xiii. 14—17.

The Covenant of Selection. (4.) "The fourth covenant was *the national covenant of selection*. This was to the effect that Abraham's own son was to be his heir, and that through him, and not through Eliezer of Damascus, his multitudinous seed was to come.—Gen. xv. 1—7, 13, 16, 18.

The Covenant of Circumcision. (5.) "The fifth covenant, which was also national, is called by St. Stephen *the covenant of circumcision*.—Acts vii. 8. It is recorded in Genesis xvii. 2—14. The primary meaning of this covenant evidently applies to Abraham and his literal descendants. The special blessings it promised were a numerous natural posterity, the perpetual ownership of the land of Canaan, and a national adoption as the people of God. But, unlike the first covenants, this covenant contained a condition upon which its blessings depended. You will observe that no mention is made of repentance, of faith, or of love to God. The only condition is the performance of a physical act, namely, 'Every male among you shall be circumcised.'—Gen. xvii. 10.

The Covenant of Sarah's Lineage. (6.) "The sixth covenant was *the national covenant of the lineage of Sarah*. It implied that she was to be the mother of the promised seed.—Gen. xviii. 1—14.

The Covenant of Heirship. (7.) "The seventh covenant was *the national covenant of heirship*. It distinctly promised that Isaac was to be Abraham's heir, and that the appointed seed was to come through him. Hence, we read: 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called.'—Gen. xxi. 12.

The Covenant of Reward. (8.) "The eighth covenant was *the personal covenant of special reward for faithful service*. It conferred blessings and honours upon Abraham personally. On his account, it promised to his seed conquest over their enemies; and it also renewed the promises that he should have a numerous natural and spiritual posterity, and that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed.—Gen. xxii. 15—19.

The National Covenants. 2. "All the national covenants included Abraham and the whole of his descendants through Isaac and Jacob—in fact, the entire people of Israel. And in each of these covenants, infants were, of course, included. They cannot be said to have *entered* the covenants; for that would imply consciousness, responsibility and volition on their part. They were simply *born* into them by their natural birth. They no more *entered* into these national covenants, than the unborn human race entered the universal covenants which God made with Adam and with Noah. How could unconscious infants *enter* into a covenant? The descendants of Abraham were simply *included* in these covenants, and that solely on account of their embracing the whole nation of Israel, of which every Israelite formed a part.

The Covenants' National Blessings. 3. "So far as the Abrahamic covenants were of a national character, they simply conferred certain temporal and religious privileges, such as separation from the surrounding nations, as the *national* people of God; the promise of a numerous posterity; the possession of the land of Canaan; the guardianship of the Oracles of God; the right to join in public worship; instruction by the prophets; and, finally, the birth, from among them, of the Messiah.—Gen. xv. 18; xvii. 1—11; Rom. iii. 1—3; ix. 4, 5.

"These national privileges involved great responsibilities; they also pointed to spiritual blessings, being, in fact, intended as a preparation for them. But St. Paul makes it luminously clear that being of the natural seed of Abraham, and in the national Abrahamic covenants, did not secure or

imply either admission into the covenant of grace, or the faith which Abraham possessed, or the forgiveness of sins, or the enjoyment of spiritual life.—Rom. ix. 6—8; Gal. iii. 9.

Circumcision 4. “To the universal covenant with Noah, a **Token of** God attached a universal ‘token,’ namely, the **one Covenant.** rainbow—Gen. ix. 12, 13. And to the fifth national covenant with Abraham and his seed, God attached a national ‘token,’ namely, circumcision—Gen. xvii. 11. As there was no saving virtue in the rainbow, so there was no saving virtue in circumcision. Each of these tokens was didactic, not sacramental. Circumcision, when administered to Israelitish infants, was a token that they had been born within that Abrahamic covenant which secured to Israel certain distinctive national blessings. This covenant was quite distinct from the covenant of grace made between God the Father and God the Son, which confers salvation through faith upon all its members, and which was revealed unto Abraham thirty years before the covenant of circumcision was made with him.

Circumcision 5. “The Word of God never connects a **Seal of** physical circumcision with personal faith, **Abraham’s** *except with regard to Abraham himself.* It **Faith.** was to *him* ‘a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision.’—Rom. iv. 11. But the Scriptures never speak of circumcision as being ‘a seal of faith’ to anyone else. And to argue, as some do, that because circumcision was the ‘seal’ of Abraham’s faith, therefore, it was also the ‘seal’ of the faith of unconscious infants, who were perfectly incapable of faith, is not only at variance with the Word of God, but also dangerous, delusive and absurd.

“You will perceive, as our discussion advances, that Christian-baptism stands in a totally different category from the rite of circumcision, which was compulsorily performed upon every citizen of the Israelitish nation; whereas baptism, on the contrary, is a voluntary act, and a profession of personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And having considered the Abrahamic covenants, and, in particular, the covenant of circumcision, you will now be prepared for the observations yet to follow.

Baptism not Christian-Circumcision. 6. "The New Testament furnishes no authority for the assumption that baptism is Christian-circumcision. It is true that in Col. ii. 11, 12, circumcision and baptism are mentioned close together. And from this circumstance, some have supposed that baptism came as the Christian substitute for circumcision. But the circumcision alluded to in these verses cannot be the Abrahamic or Mosaic circumcision, which was a cutting off, with a knife, of a piece of flesh. For the apostle calls it 'the circumcision of *Christ*'; not that of Abraham or of Moses. It was, therefore, a circumcision performed by Christ upon believers—and not upon their bodies, but upon their hearts. As we read in Rom. ii. 29: 'Circumcision is that of the *heart*, in the *spirit*, not in the letter.' And, again, the same apostle says: 'We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.'—Phil. iii. 3.

Christian-Circumcision the Work of the Holy Spirit. 7. "Moreover, the apostle speaks of this circumcision as 'not made with hands.' Hence, it was not a manual, but a *spiritual* act; not a human, but a *Divine* act; which St. Paul further describes as a 'putting off of the body of the flesh'—or fallen and carnal nature. Christian-circumcision, therefore, is spiritual circumcision—not baptism, but inward renewal. And as apostolic baptism was a profession of that renewal, and of union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection, the apostle might well add: 'Buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.'—Col. ii. 12.

Bishop WILSON:—The meaning is plain. The circumcision of the true convert, is made without hands. It consisted in putting off, spurning, renouncing, casting away with disgust, the body of the sins of the flesh. This may well be called "the circumcision of Christ."—*Lectures on Colossians* ii. 11.

Bishop LIGHTFOOT:—The distinguishing features of the higher circumcision are three-fold: (1) It is not external, but inward; not made with hands, but wrought by the Spirit. (2) It divests not of a part only of the flesh, but of the whole body of carnal affections. (3) It is the circumcision, not of Moses, or of the patriarchs, but of Christ.—*Comment on Colossians* ii. 11.

Even 8. "The circumcision of which Paul speaks **Regeneration.** in these verses, is neither the ancient rite of circumcision nor the external act of baptism; but spiritual-circumcision, or regeneration. Hence, the connecting of that spiritual-circumcision with the ordinance of baptism as its outward sign and symbol, affords not the slightest sanction to the idea that baptism is a Divine substitute for the rite of circumcision. But inasmuch as the apostle places spiritual-circumcision, or regeneration, *before baptism*, he, by so doing, gives an indirect testimony to the apostolic practice of believers'-baptism, of which infants are incapable."

An "While admitting," interrupted one of the **Objection.** teachers, "that what you say seems cogent, and in harmony with New Testament teaching; I think it right to say, sir, that I have not been in the habit of recognising eight Abrahamic covenants. Following various expositors, I have thought of one, or, at the most, of two."

Three Points "True," I replied; "the idea of two **to be** covenants, or even of one only, is widely **Remembered.** entertained. But I have given you the view which seems to me most likely to be understood, and most satisfactory from the standpoint of Old Testament conditions and New Testament teaching. Whether, however, the covenants were one, or two, or eight in number, we must, at any rate, be clear on these points:—

(1.) "That the covenant of grace—or God's promise and plan, prompted by Divine favour apart from human merit—was revealed to the patriarch, unto his personal salvation, many years before circumcision was instituted; and

(2.) "That the spiritual counterpart of circumcision, whether under the old or new covenants, is that operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of the children of God, whereby the flesh is mortified, and the entire nature brought into conformity with the divine ideal—a new creation in Christ Jesus.

(3.) "That infant-baptism, therefore, is not Christian-circumcision."

CHAPTER XXVI.

CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM CONTRASTED.

WHEN the discussion which is recorded in the previous chapter had proceeded thus far—

“Thank you, sir,” said the superintendent. “But would you now give us some information regarding the nature, significance, and subjects of circumcision? And in particular, would you show us wherein baptism differs from circumcision?”

Circumcision 1. “The rite of circumcision,” I replied, **Divinely** “was Divinely *commanded* throughout the **Commanded** Israelitish commonwealth. It was to be to Israel. administered to all *male* children on the eighth day; and those who were not circumcised were to be excommunicated. But the New Testament contains no command whatsoever respecting the baptism of infants, either on the eighth or any other day; and records no example of infant-baptism. In every instance of baptism recorded in detail in the New Testament, the repentance and faith of the person baptized are pre-supposed.

And to their 2. “Circumcision was administered to all **Male Servants** the *male servants* and *slaves* of Abraham and **and Slaves.** his descendants—including also their male infants—inasmuch as they were the *property* of their Israelitish masters; and we read nothing as to the spiritual character being required as a qualification for their circumcision. Baptism, on the other hand, in the apostolic age, was a personal act, in which the believer professed his faith in Christ.

Irrespective 3. “Circumcision was irrespective of **of** spiritual character, both as to Israel, and **Character.** to proselytes and their dependents. Every male foreigner, before he could partake of Israel’s national feast—the Passover—must, first, receive circumcision, the ‘token’ of the national covenant—Ex. xii. 48. As to

Abraham's natural seed, it was simply an indication of their lineal descent from him; without necessarily implying, on the part of those circumcised, the possession of any moral or spiritual qualification whatsoever. Baptism, on the other hand, was not a national institution; but was administered—so far as the New Testament informs us—only to those, of every nation, who professed 'repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.'—Matt. xxviii. 18, 19; Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38, 41; xviii. 8.

Not a Type of Baptism, but of Regeneration. 4. "Circumcision was not a type of baptism, but of the circumcision of the heart by the Holy Spirit, and of separation unto Christ in 'newness of life.' Even the Old Testament speaks of the circumcision of the *ear*, the *lips*, and the *heart*.—Jer. vi. 10; Ex. vi. 12, 30; Jer. iv. 4. St. Paul says, 'Circumcision is that of the *heart*, in the spirit, not in the letter.'—Rom. ii. 29. The circumcision of the flesh by the knife, if now discontinued, is set aside, not by baptism, but by the circumcision of the heart. Old Testament circumcision pointed forward to regeneration by the Holy Spirit. New Testament baptism points backwards to that work, as already accomplished in the believer's heart.

What Baptism is not. 5. "Circumcision was administered to those who stood in carnal relationship to Abraham. Scriptural baptism can be administered to those only who stand in personal, believing, spiritual relationship to Christ—a relationship which involves regeneration by the Holy Ghost. Baptism, however, is never spoken of in Scripture as 'a covenant;' nor as 'a sign, or seal, of a covenant'; nor as 'a seal of faith'; nor even as 'a sacrament.'

The Holy Spirit the "Seal." 6. "The 'sign,' or 'seal' of faith, and of the covenant of grace—of which only the spiritually regenerated can be members—is not baptism, but the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly we read:—'Having also *believed*, ye were *sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*, which is an earnest of our inheritance.'—Eph. i. 13; iv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 22.

An Important Question. 7. "If circumcision was the initiation into the covenant of grace—regarding which, sex could be neither a qualification nor a disqualification—how comes it that the 'token' of initiation took the form of a rite which could *not be administered to females*? If they were *included* in the covenant of grace, why was the 'token' of admission to that covenant such as they could not receive? If, on the other hand, they were *shut out* of that covenant, what a fearful thing it is to contemplate, that though they constituted, probably, the majority of the people of Israel, they were Divinely excluded from salvation on account of their sex, for which they were in no way responsible.

Circumcision did not Initiate into the Covenant of Grace. 8. "Can any opinion be scriptural which involves such a conclusion as this? Is it not perfectly clear that circumcision was not an admission into the covenant of grace, but was merely a 'token' that its recipients were entitled to the temporal and religious privileges of the Israelitish nation? The mothers of Israel and their female children were, by their birth, equally entitled with the other sex to these national privileges; although they were spared any such mark as that of circumcision, which was the 'token' of that entitlement. Natural relationship to Abraham was the title to circumcision, on the part of males only—as the agents in generation. Spiritual relationship to Christ is the title to baptism, on the part of believers of both sexes—as the recipients of *regeneration*.

"Moreover, the same command which denied circumcision to females, required and demanded that every male 'born in the house' of Abraham should be circumcised.—Gen. xvii. 12. Hence, Ishmael, Esau, and the sons of Keturah—the last wife of Abraham—were undoubtedly circumcised. Yet, strange to say, they were not included amongst the national people of God—the congregation of Israel. For we read: 'In *Isaac* shall thy seed be called.'—Gen. xxi. 12. What, then, did their circumcision do for them? Did it initiate them into the covenant of grace? How could it have done so, when—notwithstanding their circumcision—they were *excluded* from the congregation of Israel, or the

national people of God? Surely, if their circumcision had been an initiation into the covenant of grace, they would have been included amongst the chosen people. If they were spiritually qualified for admission into the covenant of grace, they were certainly fit subjects for membership in the congregation of Israel. Why, then, were they excluded?

The Facts 9. "The fact is, circumcision was not a sacrament; and it never initiated any Israelite into a spiritual standing, but only into a position of racial privilege and honour. To Abraham, *personally*, it was 'a seal of the righteousness of the faith,' which he already possessed before being circumcised.—Rom. iv. 11. As a *type*, it was designed to set forth, universally, regeneration by the Holy Spirit; but it did not confer that blessing: and without regeneration no one is included in the covenant of grace. To the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, circumcision was a 'token' that they were entitled to the privileges of the Israelitish nation. And to his uncovenanted seed, that is, *other than that through Isaac and Jacob*—it appears to have been nothing more than a 'token' of their physical relationship to him; for—in spite of their circumcision—they were excluded from the Israelitish nation, and cut off from all its distinctive privileges. Christian-baptism, however, is a profession on the part of a believer, of his regeneration, his spiritual union with Christ, and of membership in His Church and participation in the covenant of grace."

CHAPTER XXVII.

CIRCUMCISION NOT DISPLACED BY INFANT-BAPTISM.

THE interest of my Bible Class grew deeper and yet deeper, as the discussion narrated in the two preceding chapters was developed.

Did Baptism "It is evident, sir, from the points you
come as a have mentioned," said the senior teacher,
Substitute for "that circumcision and baptism are totally
Circumcision? different as to their nature, significance, and
subjects. But how do you meet the argument that infant-
baptism came in order to take the place of circumcision?"

I replied as follows:—

Scriptural 1. "Not only is the New Testament
Evidence absolutely silent, as to the displacement of
against. circumcision by infant-baptism; but the
evidence furnished by the New Testament is entirely
against the idea of such displacement.

Jews who 2. "John the Baptist, and the apostles,
had been baptized multitudes of Jews who had *pre-*
Circumcised *viously been circumcised.* Does not this
were fact show that baptism was independent
afterwards of circumcision? Our Lord was circumcised
Baptized. as an infant; but He was baptized at thirty
years of age. Paul had likewise been circumcised; but
he was baptized when he believed in Christ. How could
baptism, in these cases, be a substitute for circumcision?
Instead of being a substitute for circumcision, baptism was,
in these instances, an addition to it.

Both Rites 3. "Circumcision *continued to be practised,*
long practised by Jewish Christians, for a long time after
by Jewish the institution of baptism. Evidently, there-
Christians. fore, they did not regard baptism as
displacing circumcision.

Gentile Converts sometimes Circumcised after being Baptized. 4. "For some time after the founding of the Christian Church, *Gentile converts*, in some cases, were not only baptized, but were also *circumcised*. Even Timothy was circumcised by Paul, long after he had been baptized.—Acts xvi. 1—3. And Peter also refused to eat with certain Gentile Christians at Antioch, because they had not been circumcised. Do not these incidents show that baptism was not regarded as a substitute for circumcision, but as something different from it, and entirely independent of it?

The First Christian Council knew nothing of such Displacement. 5. "About eighteen years after the death of Christ, a discussion arose at Antioch, *on the question of circumcision*; certain men from Judea having begun to teach the Gentile converts there, saying, 'Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved.'—Acts xv. 1. This led 'Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of the brethren, to go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.'—Acts xv. 2. But, surely, this subject would never have needed to be discussed, if the apostles had been accustomed to teach that baptism had taken the place of circumcision. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the inspired account of the General Council of the apostles and elders which was held in Jerusalem to consider this matter, not a word is recorded as to baptism being the New Testament substitute for circumcision. Indeed, neither in the addresses made at the Council by Peter and James; nor in the letter sent from the Council to the Church at Antioch by the hands of Paul, Barnabas, Barsabas, and Silas—is there the slightest mention of baptism.

Circumcision never Abrogated. 6. "Before any one asserts that baptism has taken the place of circumcision, had he not better endeavour to *prove that circumcision has been abrogated*, so far, of course, as the natural seed of Abraham is concerned? Has this ever been proved? Never. Can it be proved? It cannot.

Circumcision Independent of the Mosaic Ritual. 7. "The various ceremonies distinctive of the Mosaic Ritual have, doubtless, been abrogated by the Christian dispensation; but the covenant of circumcision was instituted four hundred and thirty years before that ritual was promulgated. It must, therefore, have been essentially different from, and independent of it; although Moses absorbed circumcision into the Levitical code. As circumcision existed ages before the Mosaic economy; it may be the will of God that it should still continue to exist amongst Israelites, notwithstanding the abrogation of that economy.—Heb. viii. 8—13; Gal. iii. 17.

Circumcision to be Perpetual. 8. "When Jehovah instituted circumcision, He said to Abraham, 'My covenant shall be in your flesh for an *everlasting covenant*.'—Gen. xvii. 13. Has the covenant of circumcision ever terminated? There is no text of Scripture to that effect. If, then, the covenant is still in existence, what reason have we for supposing that circumcision, which was the 'token' of that covenant, has been done away with? As a matter of fact, it has been practised by the Jews right down to the present day.

Indirect Evidence. 9. "No passage can be produced from the Old Testament, which even hints that circumcision would terminate. And the New Testament contains no text which teaches that it has terminated. During the lengthened discussions which prevailed in the apostolic age, there were ample opportunities and pressing need for a declaration of the mind of the apostles regarding this question. The whole discussion and dissension would have been settled at once, by a declaration on their part, that circumcision was abrogated, and that infant-baptism had taken its place. That declaration was never made.

"St. Paul teaches, indeed, that circumcision was not intended for the Gentiles in the gospel dispensation—Acts xv. 28, 29; that *in Christ Jesus*, the circumcised have no advantage over the uncircumcised, but that all believers are one in Him—Col. iii. 10, 11; that neither circumcision, nor any other observances, can justify the soul before God;

that if anyone received circumcision, as a Mosaic or legal observance, he was 'a debtor to do the whole law'; that whoever sought justification by such means was 'fallen away from grace'; that in Christ alone, through faith, can justification be found—Gal. v. 1—6; that circumcision, under any circumstances, was not a saving rite; and that all who would be saved must become 'a new creation' in Christ.—Gal. vi. 15. But nowhere in the Scriptures is it stated, or implied, that the covenant of circumcision, with its national 'token,' had been, or ever would be abrogated, in the present dispensation.

Circumcision to be practised even in the Millennium. "Indeed, in Ezekiel's prediction of the Temple, which expositors of repute have explained as outlining a noble structure to be erected at Jerusalem during the millennium, we find circumcision mentioned among the observances which will then be practised by God's people Israel:—'Thus saith the Lord God, No alien, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any alien that is among the children of Israel.'—Ezek. xliv. 9. This passage, to say the least, furnishes a very striking coincidence; and it would appear to indicate that, when Israel shall have been restored to the Promised Land, and have been once more reinstated into acknowledged covenant-relationship with God, the rite of circumcision will still be continued as the 'token' of God's '*everlasting* covenant' with them, as the seed of Abraham.

Argument for Infant-Baptism fails. "The above considerations indicate to a practical certainty that the rite of circumcision has *never been Divinely abrogated*. And if it has not been thus abrogated, then it follows that infant-baptism cannot have been Divinely appointed as its substitute; and that any inference drawn from that supposed substitution is unwarrantable and worthless."

A Novel Objection. "But may it not be," asked the superintendent, "that while circumcision was to be continued amongst the descendants of Abraham, baptism was to take its place as regards the Gentiles?"

Baptism “If it be contended,” I replied, “that
Irrespective although circumcision may be continued
of amongst the Jews, yet baptism may have
Nationality. been appointed as a *parallel rite for the Gentiles*, I answer that baptism, according to the New Testament, was not ordained for, or administered to, either Gentiles or Jews, *as such*. It was instituted by Christ, as a confession of faith, for believers of ‘all the nations;’ and the apostles administered it to multitudes of such, both Jews and Gentiles. And we have no record of their baptizing any but *professed believers*.

“Taking into consideration the various points above mentioned, it appears to me that circumcision was intended for the Jewish Commonwealth only; that for them it was to be a perpetual ‘token,’ of an ‘everlasting covenant;’ and that it was, in no sense, a type of Christian-baptism. On the other hand, baptism was a positive institution, peculiar to the Christian dispensation; was in no way a substitute for circumcision; and was intended by our Lord for believers of all nations, and for believers only.”

A “Supposing, however, for the moment, for
Question the sake of argument, that baptism has come
for Infant- as a substitute for circumcision, would any
Baptists. Infant-Baptist missionaries—when baptizing a convert from heathenism—baptize also his servants and slaves, simply on the ground that they were his property, and without any spiritual qualification on their part? We know that no Evangelical ministers would even think of such a thing. They would baptize his infant children; pleading, as their justification, the example of circumcision. But that example would require missionaries to baptize the up-grown children as well, and also the servants and slaves of the convert; and that, not because of any spiritual qualification on their part, but solely on the ground of their relationship to him, as their father or owner.—Gen. xvii. 13, 23. Does not this show clearly that circumcision and baptism are essentially different? Circumcision required merely a natural relationship to Abraham, or a domestic relationship as a servant or slave, to Abraham or to one of

his seed; and this circumcision was '*outward in the flesh.*' Baptism required a supernatural relationship to Christ, which is '*inward in the spirit.*'"—Rom. ii. 28, 29.

Did the Lord's Supper "It seems to me, sir, that, so far as you have gone, your arguments are unanswerable,"
come as a remarked the superintendent. "You have
Substitute made it clear that baptism did not come as
for the the Divine substitute for circumcision. Can
Passover? you carry your case further, and prove that the Lord's Supper has not been divinely appointed as the substitute for the Passover?"

The Passover 10. "Certainly," I replied. "As it has
a Type of been shown that baptism has not come in
Redemption the room of circumcision; so it may be
by Christ. shown, by a variety of reasons, that *The Lord's Supper has not come in the place of the Passover.* Both these Old Testament rites pointed to Christ. Circumcision was a type of *regeneration by Christ*, or the circumcision of the heart through the Holy Spirit. This is called, by the apostle, 'The circumcision of Christ.'—Col. ii. 11, 12. But the Passover was a type of *redemption by Christ*, in His death as our substitute. As the Passover lamb was slain for the firstborn; so Jesus was slain for us. As the blood of the Passover-lamb was put upon the lintel and the door posts; so the blood of Christ is appropriated by the believer to himself. As the Passover-lamb was eaten, so the believer, spiritually, feeds upon Christ his Saviour; and that, not merely in the Lord's Supper—which Christ instituted as a perpetual commemoration of His death till He come—but in every act of faith in Him as his Saviour and Lord. Christ, in His sacrificial work, appropriated by faith, is the antitype of the Passover; and of this, the Lord's Supper, is the solemn memorial.

Christ is "Hence, the apostle says: 'Our passover
our also hath been sacrificed for us, even *Christ.*'
Passover. —1 Cor. v. 7. *He* is our Passover. *He* has been 'sacrificed for us.' And as circumcision and the Passover pointed *forward* to Christ and His work; so baptism and the Lord's Supper point *backward* to Him

and the operations of His Spirit. The sacred Supper tells us of His death. Baptism tells us of the believer's union with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection, and of His ability to cleanse from the guilt, pollution, and power of sin. Thus, these sacred rites continually remind the believer that *Christ is 'All, and in all.'*

Similarity, "In the case of both baptism and the
not Lord's Supper, their supposed succession to
Substitution. circumcision and the Passover is only ostensible, not actual—a similarity not a substitution; a thing of appearance not of fact.

Infant-Communion "While baptism, in the New Testament, is never called 'a covenant,' Christ gives
as that title to the Lord's Supper.—Matt.
Reasonable xxvi. 28. If, therefore, either ordinance
as ought to be administered to the infants
Infant- of Christian parents on account of their sup-
Baptism. posed covenant-relationship, one can understand Cyprian, that High-Churchman of the third century, and the Greek Church down to the present day, administering the Lord's Supper to infants. It is a most pernicious custom; but, in my judgment, it has as much argument on its side as infant-baptism. This was the opinion of the eminent Bishop Barlow. What a revolt there would be among Protestants to-day, if an attempt were made to force infant-Communion upon the Churches! Precisely such a revolt took place when infant-baptism was forced upon our Protestant ancestors in the fourth and fifth centuries."

Honest "Well," said the superintendent, "you
Conviction. have shown us clearly that baptism is not Christian-circumcision; that baptism and circumcision are essentially different; and that circumcision has not been divinely displaced by infant-baptism. On these points we are convinced."

"I am glad to hear it," I responded; "and now I will give you the testimony of some celebrated Infant-Baptists:—

Dr. HALLEY:—Circumcision, we believe with Justin Martyr, was the type of the true circumcision, by which we are circumcised from error and evil.—*Congregational Lectures*, vol. x. p. 82.

Professor AUGUSTI:—The parallel between circumcision and baptism is altogether foreign to the New Testament.—*Theology*, p. 329.

Professor PAULLUS:—The parallel of circumcision with baptism is inapposite; for, by circumcision, one was received into the nation as such, not to a religious faith.—*Commentary*, vol. iii p. 946.

Professor MOSES STUART:—How unwary are many excellent men, in contending for infant-baptism, on the ground of the Jewish analogy of circumcision! Are *females* not proper subjects of baptism? And, again, are a man's slaves to be all baptized because he is? Are they Church-members when they are so baptized? Is there no difference between engrafting into a *politico-ecclesiastical community*, and into one of which it is said that it is "not of this world?"—*Old Testament Canon*, p. 395.

Dr. W. LINDSAY ALEXANDER:—This argument from the Abrahamic covenant in favour of infant-baptism always presents itself to my mind as fallacious. . . . If baptism is to be regarded as having come in the place of circumcision, the argument from the Abrahamic covenant lies altogether with the Baptists. For . . . , the *natural descent* of the Israelites corresponds to the *spiritual descent* of believers. . . . Hence, as descent from Jewish parents must be proved before a child could be circumcised of old, so *spiritual descent by faith* from those who have conveyed to us the gospel—in other words, real conversion—must be proved before a man is entitled to be baptized.—*Life of Dr. Wardlaw*, pp. 237—239.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FOUR OBJECTIONS OF INFANT-BAPTISTS.

SEVERAL weeks elapsed after the conversation recorded in Chapter xvii., before I again saw the Rev. John Thorpe. But, to my surprise and pleasure, he again called upon me early one morning, and addressed me as follows :—

A Frank Confession. “I dare say you have wondered why I have not recently been to see you. The fact is, I have been pursuing the study of proselyte-baptism, and you will be interested in hearing that I have come to the same conclusion as Dr. Schneckenburger, namely, that the allegation that proselyte-baptism existed before the birth of Christ is contrary to the testimony of history.

“Indeed, I find that Neander, Hase, Böttiger, Olshausen, Winer, and, in fact, nearly every other German scholar of eminence corroborates Schneckenburger’s opinion. In my judgment, therefore, proselyte-baptism ought now to be finally dismissed from our controversy respecting infant-baptism.

“You will be glad to hear also, that I have come to the conclusion that there is no evidence in the New Testament that infant-baptism was practised by our Lord or His apostles. What I want to find out now is this :—When did infant-baptism really begin? But before I trouble you regarding that point, I should like to ask your opinion upon four preliminary objections :—

Women at the Lord’s Table. 1. “Some of my friends who are Infant Baptists have lately said to me: ‘You keep on asking us for a text which enjoins infant-baptism. Therefore, we think we may well pay you back in your own coin, and ask, Where do you find it enjoined in the New Testament that women ought to be admitted to the Lord’s Supper? You certainly admit them in spite of

the fact that there is no command for so doing. Why, then, should you not act in the same manner in regard to infant-baptism? ”

Their Presence “The answer is obvious,” I replied. “The
Clearly command, although not directly given, is dis-
Implied. tinctly implied. The Scriptures inform us that in the apostolic age, both ‘men and women’ were baptized, on the profession of their faith.—Acts viii. 12. And as baptism and the Lord’s Supper were, evidently, appointed by our Lord as perpetual ordinances for His followers; the fact that women received the first of these ordinances, implies that they received the second as well. That women were also members of the Church, is evident from 1 Corinthians xi. 1—16; xiv. 34. And as members of Christ’s Church, they would be admitted to Christ’s Table. They were associated with the apostles, while praying in the upper room.—Acts i. 14. Certain women were even called of God to ‘prophesy.’—Acts xxi. 9. In the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul salutes many Christian women by name; and he refers to Phebe as being a deaconess —Rom. xvi. 1. Moreover, writing concerning the present dispensation, he says to the Galatians: ‘There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no *male and female*; for ye all are *one* man in Christ Jesus.’—Gal. iii. 28. From this passage, it is evident that the apostle lays down the principle, that every Christian privilege granted to men, as believers, is granted equally to women, as believers. Finally, in Holy Scripture, as well as in common speech to-day, the word ‘man’ is often used to imply an individual, a person, a member of the human race, regardless of sex as well as of age.”—Ezra iii. 1; 1 Cor. xi. 28; Col. i. 28.

The Jewish 2. “Another objection of my friends is
Sabbath this,” said Mr. Thorpe:—“‘It is unreasonable
and the to ask us to produce a text of Scripture com-
Lord’s Day. manding infant-baptism; as unreasonable, indeed, as it would be for us to ask you for a text which abrogates the Jewish Sabbath, and substitutes the Christian Sabbath, or Lord’s Day, in its stead.’ ”

The Change “Well,” I answered, “we would be con-
Apostolically tent if they could shew us any apostolic
Sanctioned. *sanction* for infant-baptism, or even an
apostolic *allusion* to it—both of which we have in reference
to the Christian Sabbath, or Lord’s Day.—Rev. i. 10;
Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. But as they can furnish
neither apostolic command, apostolic example, nor apostolic
allusion in regard to infant-baptism, it is hopeless to
attempt to prove that infant-baptism is an apostolic in-
stitution.”

Is Infant- 3. “To such answers as you have just
Baptism given,” said Mr. Thorpe, “my friends reply
Prohibited? by saying :—‘ Well, if the New Testament
does not mention infant-baptism, at all events it contains no
text which prohibits it.’ ”

It is Tacitly “Now, is this statement true?”—I re-
Condemned. sponded. “And if it be true, how does that
help their plea for infant-baptism? They might just as
fairly plead for the worship of the Virgin Mary, prayers to
saints, and the use of holy water, on the same ground;
for the New Testament contains no text which directly
prohibits them. And why? Because not one of these
superstitious customs existed at the time when the New
Testament was written. And just so with infant-baptism.
According to the teaching of the New Testament, neither
John the Baptist, nor the apostles, nor any of their con-
temporaries either practised the baptism of infants, or ever
thought of anyone doing so. How, then, could the apostles
directly prohibit a custom which had no existence in their
day, and which, so far as their writings inform us, they
never foresaw, or contemplated as likely to come into vogue,
as a custom of the Church?

“But it appears to my mind that as John the Baptist
and the apostles—so far as the New Testament informs us
—baptized only those who professed repentance and faith;
every such baptism, every record of such baptism, and every
injunction or reference to such baptism, is a tacit prohibition
of any other baptism than that of believers.

An "Permit me to give you an illustration.

Illustration. A gentleman told his servant to buy him a Great Western Time Table. The servant bought, instead, a North Western Time Table. When asked by his master why he had done so, he said that he thought it would not matter; especially as he had not been prohibited from buying that particular book. The master replied: 'My command to you to buy a Great Western Time Table, implied a prohibition against purchasing any other.' And so it is in relation to baptism. Our Lord's command to baptize believers, implies, in my judgment, a prohibition of the baptism of any but believers."

Is Infant-Baptism an Evolution from Judaism? 4. "My Infant-Baptist friends have yet another objection," said Mr. Thorpe. "It is this:—'Although the New Testament makes no definite allusion to infant-baptism, yet we think we are right in assuming that it nevertheless existed, as an evolution from the ecclesiastical ideas and customs which prevailed in Israel.'"

Judaism, and its Spiritual Anti-types. "Christianity," I replied, "is not grafted upon Judaism; and is not an evolution from it. Yet, it is related to Judaism, and is, indeed, its fulfilment. That is to say, in Christianity, the types of Judaism meet with their anti-types. But these anti-types do not move upon the same plane as their types. For instance:—

Illustrations. (1) "Judaism was racial and national. Christianity is individual and spiritual.

(2.) "The national Commonwealth is fulfilled in the spiritual Church.

(3.) "The literal infant under Judaism meets its fulfilment in 'the babe in Christ'—the young believer.

(4.) "The living infant who was circumcised, finds its anti-type, not in an unconscious babe at the font, but in the newly born soul—the young convert—who having experienced spiritual circumcision, or regeneration, now proceeds to confess Christ in believers'-baptism.

“All this would be easily understood by enlightened Jews who accepted Christ in the apostles’ days, exactly as many Jews do in the present day. Hence, their readiness, then and now, to ‘put on Christ’ in the ordinance of believers’-baptism.

“The supposed evolution of infant-baptism from Judaism is contrary to fact; while the assumption that infant-baptism existed in the apostolic age, or even in the times of the apostolic and the early Fathers, is contrary to history. This last point, I shall be glad to discuss with you at our next meeting. Meanwhile, I would ask you to note carefully the testimony of two of the most highly esteemed Infant-Baptists of the last century:—

JOHN ANGELL JAMES:—As to the argument which is founded upon the constitution of the Jewish Theocracy, we consider it so irrelevant and inapplicable, that the very attempt to bring it forward in support of a Christian institute, betrays at once the weakness of the cause.—*On Dissent*, p. 10.

Dr. WARDLAW:—The Jewish constitution was entirely *sui generis*, instituted by Jehovah for special purposes, never by Him intended to be, nor indeed capable of being imitated. In the primary constitution of the Christian Church, there was an actual departure from it, and a complete change of system.—*The Scripture Argument*, p. 31.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHEN DID INFANT-BAPTISM BEGIN?

At our next conversation, Mr. Thorpe began by saying: "I want now to come to close quarters with you, on the question—When did infant-baptism really begin?"

Infant-Baptism 1. "With all my heart," I responded. **not Apostolic.** "And, first of all, I would remind you that it has long been admitted by many of the most eminent Infant-Baptists that there is no historical evidence of the practice of infant-baptism until about two hundred years after Christ. The inspired writers of the New Testament make no mention of such a practice, which they would certainly have done, had it been in vogue in their days. And when we come to the Fathers who immediately followed them, we find them as silent about infant-baptism as the apostles themselves.

INFANT-BAPTISM WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES OF HISTORY.

Name.	Date.	Instances of Infant- Baptism.		Mentions of Infant- Baptism.	
Clement	First Century	...	None	...	None.
Polycarp.....	First Century	...	None	...	None.
Barnabas	First Century	...	None	...	None.
Ignatius	First Century	...	None	...	None.
Epistle to Diognetus.....	First Century	...	None	...	None.
Hermas	First Century	...	None	...	None.
Papias.....	First Century	...	None	...	None.
The Didaché	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
Gospel of Peter.....	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
Quadratus	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
Aristides.....	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
Justin Martyr	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
Athenagoras	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
Tatian	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
Apocalypse of Peter.....	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
The Diatessaron	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
Testament of Abraham	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
Theophilus of Antioch...	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
Clementine Recognitions	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
Clement of Alexandria	Second Century	...	None	...	None.
Irenæus	Second Century	...	None	...	None.

Not mentioned “This tabular list includes all the writings for of the first two centuries which are contained two Centuries. in Clark’s Ante-Nicene Library; and it may be confidently affirmed that not one of them records a single case of an infant being baptized, or even makes any mention of infant-baptism.

Why not mentioned. “Surely, if infant-baptism had been apostolic, it would necessarily have been deemed important by the apostles and by their immediate successors. Hence, it would certainly have been explicitly named in their works, and cases of infant-baptism would have been recorded therein. But instead of this, we find that in not even one of their writings is any mention made of the subject. Can any one fairly question the inference—that infant-baptism had not then begun to exist in the Christian Church?

The Fathers teach 2. “But this is not all. The Fathers make frequent reference to baptism; but **Believers’** they do so in such terms as prove that **Baptism.** baptism in their days was believers’-baptism. For instance —

IGNATIUS, A.D. 100:—Let your baptism be to you as armour, your faith as a helmet, your love as a spear, and your patience as a panoply.—*Epistle to Polycarp*, c. vi.

THE DIDACHE, A.D. 115:—But concerning baptism, thus baptize ye: Having first recited all these precepts. baptize into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

But before the baptism, let him who baptizeth and the one to be baptized fast, and any others who may be able. And thou shalt command him who is baptized to fast one or two days before.—c. vii.

BARNABAS, A.D. 120:—Blessed are they who, *placing their trust in the Cross*, have gone down into the water.—c. xi.

CLEMENT of Alexandria, A.D. 180:—Instruction leads to faith; and faith with baptism is trained by the Holy Spirit. For that faith is the one universal salvation of humanity . . . We also, repenting of our sins, renouncing our iniquities, purified by baptism, speed back to the eternal light—children to the Father.—*The Instructor*, book i. c. vi.

TERTULLIAN, A.D. 204:—That laver is the seal of faith We are not baptized in order that we may cease from sinning; but because we *have* ceased, since *in heart* we have been bathed already.—*De Pœnitentia*, c. vi.

Clement of Alexandria. 3. "But do we not read in a work by Clement of Alexandria, of 'children who were taken out of the water?'"—asked Mr. Thorpe. "And does not this imply infant-baptism?"

Refers to Young Converts. "The work you refer to," I answered, "is the *Pedagogue*, in which Clement considers Christians as the *children*, or disciples, throughout the whole work. His reference is not to infants, but to young converts or immature Christians, whom he speaks of as 'children.' So Neander, Matthies, and Baumgarten-Crusius explain it. If the passage proves anything in reference to baptism, it is that it was by *immersion*."

Justin Martyr. 4. "How do you explain the following passage from Justin Martyr?"—asked Mr. Thorpe.

JUSTIN MARTYR, A.D. 150:—Several persons among us of sixty or seventy years old, and of both sexes, who were disciplined to Christ in their infancy, do continue uncorrupted.—*Apology* i. c. 15.

A Doubtful Translation. "First of all," I answered, "I object to your translation. The word used by Justin—*παῖς*—does not, necessarily, convey the idea of unconscious infancy. It is applied to our Saviour when He was *twelve years old*.—Luke ii. 43. It is also applied to the '*children* crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David.'—Matt. xxi. 15. It is even applied to our Lord after His ascension into heaven.—Acts iv. 27, 30. Had Justin meant to imply that those of whom he was writing were made disciples in their unconscious infancy, he would have employed a different word. In my judgment, his allusion is to children who had arrived at years of understanding, and who, of their own choice, had become the followers of Jesus Christ.

Discipled, then Baptized. "Further, you will observe that this quotation from Justin makes no mention whatever of infant-baptism. It simply states that certain persons had been '*discipled* to Christ in their childhood.' And the word translated '*discipled*,' is the same word as our Lord used in the great Commission to

His apostles:—‘Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them.’—Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. And the Scriptures shew us how the apostles made disciples. It was by preaching. Then, after preaching, came the baptism of the converts. That the same custom prevailed in Justin Martyr’s time will be evident from his own words:—

JUSTIN MARTYR, A.D. 150:—He who is illuminated, is washed.—*Apology*, i. c. 61.

This washing is called ‘illumination’; because they who learn these things are enlightened in their minds.—*Apology* i. c. 61.

We were—corporeally—born without our will; but we are not to remain children of necessity and ignorance; but *in baptism* are to *have choice, knowledge, &c.* This we learned from the apostles.—*Apology* i. c. 61.

In order that we may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and *has repented of his sins*, the Name of God.—*Apology* i. c. 61.

We testify that that very baptism which he announced, is alone able to purify *those who have repented*; and this is the water of life. For what is the use of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and body alone? Baptize the soul from wrath and from covetousness, from envy and from hatred; and lo! the body is pure.—*Dialogue with Trypho*, c. 14.

They who are persuaded, and believe that those things which are taught by us are true, and promise to live according to them, are directed first to pray and ask of God, with fasting, the forgiveness of their former sins. . . . Then we bring them to some place where there is water, and they are regenerated in the same way of regeneration by which we were regenerated; for they are washed in water in the Name of God the Father, of our Saviour, and of the Holy Spirit.—*Apology* i. c. 61.

“I think that, after these quotations, you will agree with me that Justin Martyr taught believers’-baptism; and that when he mentioned the cases of certain Christians who had been ‘discipled to Christ in their childhood,’ he used the term ‘childhood’ to indicate, not the period of unconscious infancy, but the period of *youth*; when the persons referred to could, as he says, exercise ‘choice and knowledge,’ and were thus capable of repentance and faith.”

Professor SEMISCH, the biographer of Justin :—Wherever Justin refers to baptism, adults appear as the objects to whom the rite is administered. Of an infant-baptism he knows nothing. The traces of it which some persons believe they have detected in his writings are *groundless fancies, artificially produced*.—*Life of Justin Martyr*, vol. ii. p. 334.

Irenæus. 5. "How do you deal with the following passage from Irenæus?"—resumed Mr. Thorpe:—

IRENÆUS, A.D. 182:—Christ came to save all, through means of Himself—all, I say, who through Him are regenerated unto God—infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men.—*Against Heresies*, book ii. c. 22, 4.

Not referring to Baptism. "Well," I replied, "one thing is clear ; namely, that there is no mention of baptism in this passage. Nor, in the context, is Irenæus treating of baptism, either directly or indirectly. Infant-Baptists, however, infer that as baptism, in patristic literature, is often spoken of as 'regeneration'; so, when Irenæus wrote of infants being 'regenerated,' he meant that they had been baptized. For this inference, there is no certain ground. On the other hand, it seems much more in harmony with the general teaching of Irenæus to understand him to mean by the phrase 'regenerated unto God,' not baptism, but the general recovery and salvation of all classes of people, through the incarnation and redemption of Christ.

(1.) "The idea of Irenæus was that, Christ came to renew the human race; that He, therefore, personally passed through every period of life, from infancy to about *fifty* years of age; and that thus, by His incarnation and example, He sanctified humanity in every stage of its life, and in all its experiences.

(2.) "If this view be accepted, the passage will have many parallels in the writings of Irenæus. If, on the other hand, infant-baptism be understood to be indicated, the passage will stand absolutely alone, without a single parallel sentence in his writings to support it.

(3.) "Further, in numerous passages, Irenæus shews clearly that he did not teach that spiritual regeneration was

the result of baptism, but of faith which comes from the operation of the Holy Spirit.—*Book iii. c. 17, 1; iv. c. 5, 5; c. 6, 5, 7; c. 8, 2.*

(4.) “Moreover, in the writings of Irenæus, the word ‘regeneration’—unless it be preceded by such words as ‘baptism’ and ‘bath,’ governing it in the genitive—never means baptism.”

Professor BAUMGARTEN-CRUSIUS:—The celebrated passage in Irenæus is not to be applied to infant-baptism.—*History of Dogma, part ii., Div. 3, p. 1209.*

Professor VENEMA:—The sense may be—that Christ came to save men of every age, and also to sanctify or save infants.—*Ecclesiastical History, vol. iii. 2.*

Professor ROSSLER:—All the arguments put together do not prove that ‘regenerated unto God’—in this passage of Irenæus—means to be baptized.—*Library of the Christian Fathers, vol. i. p. 11.*

Rev. G. A. JACOB, D.D.:—He describes the quotation from Irenæus as—A passage in which infant-baptism is not mentioned, and by no means necessarily implied.—*Ecclesiastical Polity, p. 273.*

Professor HAGENBACH:—This passage does not afford ‘any decisive proof’ that ‘infant-baptism had come into use in the primitive Church.’ It only expresses the beautiful idea that Jesus was Redeemer in every stage of life, and for every stage of life.—*History of Christian Doctrine, vol. i. p. 193, 4.*

Origen. 6. “I am sorry to trouble you further,” said Mr. Thorpe; “but I should like to hear your opinion upon the following passages from Origen:—

ORIGEN, A.D. 230:—Little children are baptized for the remission of sins. . . . The Church received a tradition from the apostles, to give baptism to little children.—*Homily xiv. in Luke. Romans, book v. c. 6.*

“I am glad,” I responded, “that you have mentioned these quotations; and my reply to them is as follows:—

Unreliable “These passages do not now exist in the **Translations.** Greek language—the language which Origen wrote—but in a Latin translation made by Jerome and Rufinus, at the close of the fourth century. These translations are notoriously, and admittedly, unreliable and corrupt. No dependence whatever, therefore, can be

placed upon the passages above quoted; especially as in other parts of his writings, Origen clearly teaches the baptism of believers.

Child-Baptism; “But supposing the passages to be genuine, **not Infant-** and properly translated, they only show that **Baptism.** at the beginning of the *third* century, child-baptism had, somehow, and to some extent, come into practice; that it was objected to by Christian people; and that Origen in endeavouring to defend it, appealed, not to the New Testament—which never mentions it—but to the supposed magical effect of baptism, and to *uninspired tradition*. In other words, he did not attempt to prove it from the New Testament.

Professor NEANDER:—His words in that age, cannot have much weight; for whatever was regarded as important was alleged to be from the apostles. Besides, many walls of partition intervened between this age and that of the apostles, to intercept the view.—*Church History, part ii. p. 367.*

Bunsen's “For, indeed, it is by no means clear that **Testimony.** Origen, in his references to child-baptism, makes any allusion to unconscious infants. The word he employs is not *infantes*, or babes, but *parvuli*; by which term, says Baron Bunsen, we must understand Origen to mean ‘little growing children from *about six to ten years of age*.’ The Baron also affirms that, when all the circumstances are taken into consideration, ‘no other interpretation is admissible.’ Origen himself, indeed, appears to settle the question. For when Celsus had charged the Christians with initiating ‘mere children’ into their churches—whereas the Pagans, he said, initiated only ‘intelligent’ persons—Origen replies by saying:—

ORIGEN A.D. 230:—We exhort the little children to rise to the elevation of thought to the man. . . . And when those of the exhorted that make progress show that they have been cleansed by the Word, and as much as possible, have lived a better life, *then* we invite them to be initiated among us.—*Against Celsus, book iii. 59.*

Origen taught “This passage appears in the original **Believers'-** Greek of Origen; and it shows that the **Baptism.** ‘little children,’ whose initiation, or baptism, he approved of, were old enough to be ‘exhorted,’ to

be 'cleansed by the Word,' to manifest a change of heart, and to be capable of being baptized of their own free will. Is it not clear that they could not have been unconscious infants, and that Origen cannot, with any certainty, be fairly quoted as approving, or even mentioning, the baptism of unconscious babes? Indeed, he himself says, in another place—'The benefit of baptism depends on the *deliberate purpose* of the baptized.' The following passages from his writings shew clearly that the baptism which Origen taught was the baptism of believers.

ORIGEN, A.D. 230 :—I beseech you not to come to baptism but with great circumspection. Shew, previously, 'fruits meet for repentance' . . . and then you will receive 'the remission of sins.—*Homily iv. in Joshua.*

Let *each one* of the *believers* recall to mind, when he first came to the water of baptism . . . what words he there used at that time; how he renounced the devil; that he would not use his pomps, nor his works, nor comply, at all, with any of his services and pleasures.—*Homily xiii. in Numbers.*

The Bible, "But, what have we, who are Protestants, **not Tradition.** to do with *tradition*? We have the Holy Scriptures; and we gladly acknowledge their authority and sufficiency, and follow them as our only guide in faith and practice. Roman Catholics and Ritualists are never weary of pleading tradition, which, indeed, is their only defence for their superstitious beliefs and practices. We may well say of them, as the Saviour said to the Pharisees: 'Ye have made void the Word of God because of your tradition.'—Matt. xv. 6. But true Protestants will reject tradition, and will stand by the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

Superstition Rampant. "Nothing has proved more unreliable than tradition. No confidence can be placed in it. And especially is this the case in reference to the second and third centuries after Christ. Not only did infant-baptism and infant-Communion come into existence in connection with the superstitions of that period; but also all kinds of unscriptural ceremonies and erroneous beliefs. Candidates for baptism were divested of their clothing; had salt put upon their hands; were daubed with the priest's spittle;

were clothed in white, when coming out of the water ; were signed with the sign of the cross, and anointed with oil ; and then they walked from the water with a lighted taper in their hands. The doctrines of baptismal regeneration, of purgatory, and other dogmas equally unscriptural, arose, and spread far and wide ; until the simplicity of the gospel was almost buried beneath the inventions of men. These superstitions arose gradually, and existed long before we find any trace of infant-baptism ; but the cause of their origin was ever the same—the ignorance and sacerdotalism which began to prevail. And the plea for their continuance was ever the same, namely, the authority and traditions of the Church.

The Inspired Guide. “Amid all the confusion and error occasioned by these circumstances, it is the privilege of God’s people to hearken to the ‘sure word of prophecy.’—2 Peter i. 19. We turn away from Origen’s so-called ‘tradition of the apostles,’ to the clear *teaching* and *example* of the apostles, as recorded in the New Testament. And there we find no command, example, sanction, or allusion, with reference to infant-baptism.”

An Objection. “It is sometimes said,” remarked Mr. Thorpe, “that the reason why no cases of infant-baptism are mentioned in the records of the first and second centuries is—because so many infants were baptized during that period, that everybody understood it to be an acknowledged custom. But one can scarcely suppose that this statement is intended to be taken seriously. If such baptisms had really taken place, it is incredible that not even one should have been recorded on the pages of history.”

First recorded case of Infant-Baptism. “You are correct,” I replied ; “and the very first case of infant-baptism on record, is that of Galetes the son of the Emperor Valens, who died in the year 379, A.D. This child was evidently at the point of death ; and his father ‘swore’ with an oath that it should not forfeit eternal happiness for lack of baptism ; and so he compelled an unwilling bishop to administer the ceremony. After the *fourth* century, we

read of many cases of infant-baptism; and, sometimes, we are told who held the infant at the font, and how it behaved while being baptized. But throughout the records of the first and second centuries, not one case of infant-baptism can be found. Hence, the following striking testimonies of celebrated Infant-Baptists will not occasion you any surprise:—

Professor H. J. HOLTZMAN:—Of infant-baptism there is altogether no mention in the New Testament.—*New Testament Theology, part i. p. 380.*

Professor KAFTAN, of Berlin:—Everywhere in the New Testament, the baptism of such as had become believers is presupposed; and the New Testament knows nothing at all of any other baptism.—*Dogmatic Theology, p. 604.*

Professor BEYSCHLAG:—Baptism was originally, of course, in the Name of Jesus; and it was only administered to adults. All that has been read into the Acts of the Apostles about the baptism of children is pure fancy. Baptism presupposes the repentance and conversion of the person baptized, and his faith in the Name of Jesus as the only Name in which there was salvation.—*New Testament Theology, part i. p. 319.*

Rev. G. A. JACOB, D.D.:—There is no trace of infant-baptism until the *last part of the second century*, when a passage is found in Irenæus, which may possibly—and only possibly—refer to it. Nor is it anywhere distinctly mentioned before the time of Tertullian, who, while he testifies to the practice, was himself rather opposed to it. As an established order of the Church, therefore, *it belongs to the third century.*—*Ecclesiastical Polity, p. 272.*

Dean STANLEY:—In the apostolic age, and in the *three centuries* which followed, it is evident that, as a general rule, those who came to baptism came in full age, and of their own deliberate choice. We find a few cases of the baptism of children. In the third century we find *one* case of the baptism of infants. The liturgical service of baptism was framed entirely for *full-grown converts*, and is only by considerable adaptation applied to the case of infants. Gradually, however, the practice spread, and after *the fifth century*, the whole Christian world, East and West, Catholic, Protestant, Episcopal, and Presbyterian—with the special exception of the Baptists—have baptized children in their infancy. Whereas, in the early ages, adult-baptism was the rule, and infant-baptism the exception; in later times infant-baptism is the rule, and adult-baptism the exception.—*Contemporary Review, 1879, p. 699.*

CHAPTER XXX.

HOW DID INFANT-BAPTISM ORIGINATE?

A FEW days after the conversation recorded in the previous chapter, Mr. Thorpe called again, and addressed me as follows:—

“Whatever you may think of infant-baptism, that ceremony is now in existence; and it has been almost universally practised for many centuries. How do you account for its origin?”

It was 1. “How do I account for its origin?”—
Adopted I replied. “My answer shall be clear and
from explicit. In all probability, infant-baptism
Paganism. in the Christian Church was originally
borrowed and adopted from Paganism. This statement
may shock you; but it is true. Professor Tylor, in his work
on *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii., at page 430, shows that traces
of the practice of various lustrations for the purification of
infants have been found in many parts of the heathen
world. He instances the Kichtak Islanders; the Yumanas
of Brazil; the Jakun tribes and the Mantras of the Malay
Peninsula; the North American Indians; the natives of
New Zealand; various African tribes, including the Basutos
and the Hottentots; the natives of New Guinea; and the
Tatar tribes in Mongolia.

“Dr. Whitley Stokes says that, in addition to these cases mentioned by Professor Tylor, he has found ‘evidence that such a rite existed among the heathen Norsemen; the heathen Celts; two unconverted West African tribes; and the Mexicans before the arrival of the Spaniards.’ He says:—

WHITLEY STOKES, LL.D.:—I suggest that the source of Christian infant-baptism is to be found in folk-lore, and that this kind of baptism was originally a Pagan rite of purification, which at first, perhaps, included the mother as well as the child.—*The Academy*, vol. xlix. p. 138.

Mr. Thorpe As I read out these words, Mr. Thorpe astonished. was greatly astonished; and he exclaimed: "Hold, my dear friend, hold! You quite shock me. Infant-baptism may be a traditional practice wanting in scriptural sanction; but to say that it is of heathen origin—that is another thing, and much more serious. I wonder what next! Surely, Dr. Whitley Stokes is some injudicious person strongly biassed in favour of believers'-baptism."

An unbiassed Witness. To this I replied: "You may well be shocked, Mr. Thorpe. Sad, however, to say, the early Church received other things besides infant-baptism from heathenism. Without going into these matters, I wish now to assure you that Dr. Whitley Stokes has not approached this subject from the standpoint of a partisan theologian, but simply as an archæologist. He is an eminent jurist and man of letters, an antiquary and folk-lorist of reputation. It is as an enquirer along these lines that he has investigated the subject of infant-baptism; and he sums up the whole matter as follows:—

WHITLEY STOKES, LL.D.—From the instances collected by Professor Tylor, and those set forth in the present paper, it is certain that the ceremonial cleansing of new-born children existed among Pagan races in many different parts of the world; and it may fairly be inferred that some such rite was found among all the Pagan races with which the early Christians came in contact. From one or more of these races, it is probable that the Christians of the second century borrowed the practice of infant-baptism, spiritualising the rite so as to adapt it to the doctrines of original sin and regeneration.—*Academy*, vol. xlix. p. 138.

What led to this? "But, surely," said Mr. Thorpe, "if these writers are correct, there must have been some deep-rooted superstition, or some other powerful motive which could have induced Christian people to do such an outrageous thing as to borrow a religious ceremony from Paganism and stamp it with the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

It arose in Superstition. 2. "I think I can soon satisfy your mind on that point," I answered. "In my judgment, infant-baptism arose as the result of a belief in the supposed mystical, magical power, and the sacramental efficacy of

baptism. We find this doctrine even in the first century. It gradually deepened and spread, as the years rolled by, until, in the fourth and fifth centuries, it was a matter of everyday teaching that baptism washes away original and actual sin, that it conveys spiritual regeneration, and that, indeed, without baptism there can be no salvation."

"How do you prove this?"—asked Mr. Thorpe.

Now for the Evidence. 3. "I will prove the doctrine by quoting from the writings of the early Fathers themselves," I answered; "and when I have done this, I will shew the connection between this false teaching and infant-baptism.

Clement. CLEMENT, A.D. 97:—How can we hope to enter into the palace of God, unless we keep our baptism holy and undefiled?—*Epistle* ii. c. 6.

Barnabas. BARNABAS, A.D. 100:—We descend into the water full of sins and defilement; but come up, bearing fruit in our heart, and having the fear of God, and trust in Jesus in our spirit.—c. xi.

Hermas. HERMAS, A.D. 100:—Your life has been, and will be, saved through water.—*Book* i. *Vision* iii. c. 3. There is no other repentance than that which takes place, when we descended into the water, and received remission of our former sins.—*Book* ii. *Commandment* iv. c. 3.

Justin Martyr. JUSTIN MARTYR, A.D. 150:—He speaks of baptism as—The washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration.—*Apology* i. c. 66.

Describing candidates for baptism, he says—They are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For . . . they then receive the washing with water.—*Apology* i. c. 61.

Xanthippe. THE ACTS OF XANTHIPPE, A.D. 250:—Probus leapt into the water, saying, Jesus Christ, Son of God, let *all my sins be washed away by this water.*—c. xix.

Spiritual Change also Recognised. 4. "In the early Fathers there are, it is true, frequent references to the importance of repentance and faith and of the work of the Holy Spirit, of which I have already made mention. And, of course, these references are conclusive evidence of the practice of believers'-baptism only in the early Church. What I want you to observe now is this—that very soon after the

time of the inspired apostles, a belief arose, and gradually spread far and wide, that baptism washed away sin, conferred spiritual life, and was practically necessary for salvation.

Irenæus. IRENÆUS, A.D. 178:—We cannot be made one

in Christ Jesus, without the water which is from heaven. . . . For our bodies receive, through the laver, that unity which is destined to incorruption; but our souls receive it by the Holy Spirit. Hence, both are necessary, since both profit us in respect to a godly life.—*Against Heresies*, book iii. c. 17, 2.

Clement. CLEMENT of Alexandria, A.D. 200:—This work

of baptism is variously called grace, illumination, perfection, and washing: washing, by which we cleanse away our sins; grace, by which the penalties accruing to transgressions are remitted; illumination, by which that holy light of salvation is beheld; perfection, because with it we need nothing more.—*Book i. c. 6.*

Tertullian. TERTULLIAN, A.D. 220:—The Spirit from

heaven descends and broods upon the waters of baptism, sanctifying them by His power; and when so sanctified, they acquire the power of sanctifying.—*De Baptismo*, c. 4.

An Objection: 5. "But," interrupted Mr. Thorpe, "what

Clement and about the opinions of Clement and Hermas

Hermas. as to original sin, and the saving effect of baptism? Do not these two ideas imply that infant-baptism existed in their day?"

"No," I replied. "This objection has been well answered by Professor Matthies, who says:—

Professor MATTHIES:—Both Wall and Bingham trace back infant-baptism to the apostolic age, by *doing violence to historical evidence*. They think that Clement—because he says no one is free from sin, though he be but a day old, and Hermas—because he held baptism to be necessary to salvation, intimate that infants were baptized. You might as well assume that the sacred Scriptures themselves prescribe infant-baptism.—*Baptismatis Expositio*, p. 187.

"There is no necessary connection between a belief in original sin and the practice of infant-baptism. The Bible, indeed, teaches the former, but not the latter; and the Baptists have all down the ages denounced infant-baptism, while emphatically preaching the doctrine of original sin. Notwithstanding, then, the belief in original sin on the part of the apostolic and early Fathers, their absolute silence in reference to infant-baptism is, to my mind, conclusive

presumptive proof that they knew of no such ceremony in their day."

A Question of Consistency. 6. "But," interrupted Mr. Thorpe, "would it not be inconsistent in these early Fathers to hold the doctrine of the necessity of baptism for salvation, and yet not to practise the baptism of infants?"

People better than their Creeds. "That may be," I replied. "But it is not surprising that people are often better than their creeds; and notwithstanding the inconsistency to which you refer, history records no case of infant-baptism during the first two centuries. The full consequences of this doctrine, however inevitable they might ultimately be, did not appear until long after the doctrine itself had come to be believed. Yea, indeed, the testimony of Aristides—who was the very first Christian apologist—shows that in spite of the growing belief as to the necessity of baptism for salvation, yet Christian parents in his day and in his locality had no knowledge of the baptism of infants, and had no fear for the salvation of children who died in their infancy.

Aristides. ARISTIDES, A.D. 125:—Describing the attitude of Christian parents to their children, he says: If one or other of them have bondmen, and bondwomen, or children, through love towards them they persuade them to become Christians; and when they have done so, they call them brethren without distinction. . . . And when a child has been born to one of them, they give thanks to God; and if, moreover, it happens to die in childhood, they give thanks to God the more, as for one who has passed through the world without sins.—*Apology, c. 15.*

The Error Spread Gradually. 7. "I would now ask you to observe four points with reference to these quotations:—
(1.) "That the doctrine of the sacramental efficacy of baptism arose early, spread gradually, and that the expression of belief in the doctrine grew stronger with the lapse of time.

Still no Infant-Baptism. (2.) "That in spite of the rise and spread of this false doctrine among the ministers, so strong was the general conviction of the

Church that baptism ought not to be divorced from a personal profession of repentance and faith, that we have to wade through the writings of the early Fathers for more than two hundred years before we find any certain trace of the baptism of children.

The Extent of the Superstition. (3.) "That, after a long period of false teaching, the most wild and exaggerated ideas at length prevailed as to the magical power of baptism. For instance, it was called 'grace,' 'life,' 'salvation,' 'the gate of innocence,' 'the attainment of the kingdom of heaven,' 'the garment of immortality,' 'the entrance upon eternal life,' 'regeneration of the soul,' 'the death of sins,' 'the sacrament of grace,' 'the remission of sins,' 'the water of life,' 'the laver of regeneration,' 'the conveyance to God.'

What such Error must lead to. (4.) "That, when the doctrine of the sacramental efficacy of baptism began to be widely accepted; and when parents, in their ignorance and superstition, came to believe the monstrous dogma that baptism was necessary to the salvation of both infants and adults alike; then, filled with terror, they would inevitably ask that baptism should be administered to their infant children, lest they should die in their infancy and be eternally lost."

"But can you give any proof from the Fathers," interrupted Mr. Thorpe, "that the practice of infant-baptism was actually connected with the belief in the sacramental efficacy of baptism?"

The Connecting Link. "Yes, I can," I responded. "The testimony of Gregory of Nazianzen is conclusive. He was one of the Fathers who insisted upon the necessity of baptism for salvation. Nevertheless, he advised delay in the administering of baptism to children till 'they were three years old, or a little less or more; for then,' he adds, 'they are able to hear and answer the mystical words; and though they do not perfectly understand, they may receive impressions.' He also says:—

Gregory. GREGORY of Nazianzen, A.D. 360:—But some ask, "What is your opinion of infants who are not capable of judging either of the grace of baptism, or of the damage sustained by the want of it; shall we baptize them, too? By all means, *if there be any apparent danger*. For it were better they were sanctified without their knowing it, than that they should die without being sealed and initiated.—*De Baptismo, Oration xl.*

Priestly Remonstrances. "The style of the terrifying remonstrances which were adopted by the clergy, when once the dogma of baptismal regeneration had reached its zenith of power, may be seen from the following extract, taken from the so-called golden-mouthed—Chrysostom:—

Chrysostom. CHRYSOSTOM, A.D. 380:—We risk no common danger; for if it should come to pass, that, through the sudden arrival of death, we depart hence uninitiated—that is, unbaptized—though we have ten thousand virtues, our portion will be *no other than hell, and the venomous worm, and fire unquenchable, and bonds indissoluble.*—*Homily xx. in St. John.*

The Terror of the People. "Thus the pernicious doctrine spread; ever gaining fresh momentum; filling the living with terror for the dead, and driving mothers into frenzy in their clamorous entreaties to the priests to seal their dying infants with baptism, and thus to save them from everlasting damnation.

First Application for Child-Baptism. 8. "This argument against infant-baptism is considerably strengthened by the testimony of Tertullian. It appears that about the end of the second century, certain persons in North Africa, where all kinds of superstition prevailed, wished to have baptism administered to children who were just old enough to express a desire for salvation. Tertullian earnestly remonstrated against this unscriptural innovation, and said:—

Tertullian. TERTULLIAN, A.D. 204:—The Lord indeed says, 'Do not hinder them from coming unto Me.' Let them come, then, provided they are growing up; let them come provided they are learning, provided they are being taught whither they are coming; let them become Christians when they shall have become able to know Christ. Why should an innocent age hasten to the remission of sins?—*De Baptismo, c. xviii.*

The Application “The motive behind the innovation was, doubtless, the fear that these children might die, and that their salvation might be jeopardised if they were to die unbaptized. And it would seem that Tertullian, in remonstrating against the idea, was not writing about the baptism of unconscious infants, but of that of young children; for he says of them:— ‘They just know how to *ask* for salvation.’ Child-baptism gradually passed into infant-baptism.

Baron BUNSEN:—Tertullian’s opposition is to the baptism of young, growing children; he does not say one word about newborn infants; nor does Origen, when his words are accurately weighed. . . . The Church instituted child-baptism in the sense of children from six to ten years of age. . . . The baptism of newborn infants grew out of that of children advancing towards the age of youth. . . . The ancient Church, as a general rule, baptized adults, and only after they had gone through the course of instruction; and as the exception only, Christian children who had not arrived at years of maturity—but *never* infants.—*Hippolytus and his Age*, vol. iii. p. 195, 203.

Principal JOHN CUNNINGHAM, D.D.:—Infant-baptism is never heard of during the first 150 years of the Church’s history. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of Tertullian, infant-baptism came slowly into use. For if there was a danger of a baptized person disgracing his baptismal profession, there was a still greater danger of an unbaptized infant dying, and being damned for ever. So great a calamity must by all means be prevented, and more especially where it could be prevented by the easy method of dipping the infant in lukewarm water. Every mother would cry for this. . . . Adult-baptism continued to be the rule, and infant-baptism the exception for at least two centuries more. . . . Thus, infant-baptism came daily more and more into use, and was soon universal. It was a startling departure from the original institution, and the usage of three or four hundred years.—*Croall Lectures*, pp. 169—189.

Cyprian Establishes Infant-Baptism. 9. “The first undoubted mention of infant-baptism occurs in the writings of Cyprian, Bishop at Carthage, about the year A.D. 257. At a Council of sixty-seven bishops, the following question was asked by Fidus:—‘ Might an infant, at all events, one less than eight days old, be baptized, if *there were urgent fear that, otherwise, its soul would be lost?*’ And the decision of the Council was that there need be no delay; for ‘the mercy and grace of God is to be denied to

none that is born.' From this testimony, it is evident that infant-baptism was beginning to exist in the *third* century, in certain parts of the Church; and also that it was regarded by Cyprian and others with superstition, as conferring 'the mercy and grace of God.' But their belief in the necessity of infant-baptism was an inference from the gross superstition that infants who died unbaptized would be lost; and that inference is one that ought to carry no weight whatever with Protestants, who do not believe in so monstrous a doctrine as infant-damnation.

Baron BUNSEN.—Cyprian was the *first* Father who, impelled by a fanatical enthusiasm, and assisted by a bad interpretation of the Old Testament, *established infant-baptism as a principle*. . . Cyprian, and some other African bishops, his contemporaries, at the close of the *third* century, were the *first* who viewed baptism in the light of a washing away of the universal sinfulness of human nature, and connected this idea with that ordinance of the Old Testament—circumcision . . . Pædo-baptism, in the more modern sense, meaning thereby baptism of new-born infants, with the vicarious promises of parents, or other sponsors, was *utterly unknown to the early Church*, not only down to the end of the second century, but, indeed to the *middle of the third*.—*Hippolytus and his Age*, vol. iii. pp 192, 195.

And also 10. "Moreover, if the testimony of Cyprian **Infant-** is to be deemed of any value, in support of **Communion.** infant-baptism; it must also be accepted as of equal authority with reference to *infant-communion*, which he expressly mentions, and favours, as also customary in his day. Note the following:—

Dean HOOK:—In the primitive Church, children received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as appears from what Cyprian relates concerning a sucking child, who so violently refused to taste the sacramental wine, that the deacon was obliged forcibly to open her lips and pour it down her throat!—*Church Dictionary*, p. 76.

Bishop BARLOW, of Lincoln:—The truth is, I do believe, infant-baptism, how or by whom I know not, came into the world in the second century, and in the third and fourth began to be practised—though not generally—and defended as lawful from the text, John iii. 5, grossly misunderstood; and upon the like gross mistake of John vi. 53, they did, for many centuries, both in the Greek and Latin Churches, communicate infants, and *give them the Lord's Supper*; and I do confess they might do both as well as either.—Quoted in *Ingham's Subjects of Baptism*, p. 488.

“This is startling indeed! Does it not seem incredible that such a gross materialism should have become connected with the Lord’s Supper, so early as the third century? It may well lead Bible-students to reject as worthless, the arguments of Cyprian regarding infant-baptism; when they find in him such glaring ignorance and superstition in reference to infant-communion. As it has been well said by the learned—

Dr. DODDRIDGE:—Cyprian is allowed by all to speak expressly of infant-baptism as generally used in the Church; but it is justly answered that he speaks as expressly of infant-communion in the Eucharist; and that, consequently, the Divine origin of the *latter* may as well be argued from Cyprian as the *former*; yet almost all Pædobaptists allow that to be an innovation.—*Pneumatology and Ethics, Lecture 204.*

Sacramental Materialism. “There is absolutely no written testimony in favour of infant-baptism until we come to Cyprian, who was steeped in sacerdotalism and sacramentarianism, and who is the Father generally appealed to by High Churchmen, Ritualists, and Romanists. As he believed that baptism and the Lord’s Supper were *saving* ordinances, it is not to be wondered at that he was in favour of administering both of them to unconscious babes. And to this day, such is the custom in all Oriental churches. I do not wonder at this; for, to my mind, any argument which would justify baptizing an infant, would equally justify administering to it the Lord’s Supper. As Bishop Barlow, of the Church of England, has well said—*‘I do confess they might do both as well as either.’*

A Subtle Objection. “But,” interrupted Mr. Thorpe, “as, in the early Church, infants received the Lord’s Supper, does not that fact afford a presumptive argument for the existence of infant-baptism at that time, especially as we know that no one was allowed to approach the Lord’s Table unless he had been baptized?”

Two Startling Innovations. “Infant-baptism and infant-communion,” I replied, “stand or fall together. If you could prove that infant-communion was practised in the first and second centuries, you would, by so doing, establish the existence of infant-baptism at those

periods. But that is what no one can do. On the contrary, it is evident from a passage in Justin Martyr that only baptized believers were admitted to the Lord's Supper in the early ages of the Church.

Justin Martyr. JUSTIN MARTYR, A.D. 150:—This food—that is the bread and wine at the Communion—is called by us the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake, unless he believes the truths we teach, has been washed in the laver for forgiveness of sins and remission, and lives as Christ has directed.

“Both innovations were introduced about the same time, and arose from the same superstitious dogmas. Both infant-baptism and infant-communion belong to the third century, were believed to be alike necessary to salvation, and, under the terrifying influences of the priests, were clamoured for by the people in order that their infant offspring might be saved from everlasting damnation.

The Crowning of baptism. “There, sir, you have the origin of infant-baptism. It was begotten in superstition. **Superstition.** It was born in superstition. It was cradled in superstition. It has been nourished and brought up in superstition; and wherever it has been practised it has subverted the Divine Ordinance of believers'-baptism. If you think my words too strong, then I would ask you to hearken to the following Infant-Baptist testimonies:—

Professor DESSLER:—The immediate occasion of infant-baptism, it cannot be denied, was extravagant ideas of its necessity to salvation.—*Sacrament of Baptism, p. 152.*

Professor HAHN:—Infant-baptism arose from false views of original sin, and of the magical power of consecrated water.—*Theology, p. 556.*

Professor HARNACK:—Complete obscurity prevails as to the Church's adoption of child baptism, which, though it *owes its origin to the idea of this ceremony being indispensable to salvation*, is nevertheless a proof that the superstitious view of baptism had increased.—*History of Dogma vol ii. p. 142.*

Rev. G. A. JACOB, D.D.:—The belief that baptism was absolutely necessary for *all*; and that it conferred spiritual life by the inherent virtue of its material elements and by the administration of a priest, led the Church to the conclusion that infant-baptism was not merely justifiable, but *altogether necessary*.—*Ecclesiastical Polity, p. 273. 4.*

Dean STANLEY:—As to the reasons for the origin of infant-baptism, the Dean says—One, no doubt, was the superstitious feeling which regarded baptism *as a charm, indispensable to salvation*, and which insisted on imparting it to every human being who could be touched with water, however unconscious.—*Contemporary Review*, 1879, p. 699.

Professor BLAISE PASCAL, a Roman Catholic:—Referring to the introduction of infant-baptism, he says—But we must not impute to the Church the evils that have followed so fatal a change; for when she saw that the delay of baptism left a large proportion of infants still under the conviction of original sin, she wished to deliver them from this perdition, by hastening the succour which she can give; but she now sees, with bitter regret, that the benefits which she holds out to infants, become the occasion of the ruin of adults.—*Thoughts*, c. xxiv.

Opposition to Infant-Baptism. “The unscriptural and dangerous innovation—with its ecclesiastical fiction of godfathers and godmothers—met with the most strenuous opposition from those who desired to follow closely the teaching of Christ. Even in the fourth century, infant-baptism was not general in Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Gaul, Spain and Great Britain. Tertullian and Gregory of Nazianzen distinctly advised the delay of baptism as regards little children. The latter has already been quoted. The former says:—

Tertullian. TERTULLIAN, A.D. 204:—According to the condition, disposition, and age of each, the *delay* of baptism is peculiarly advantageous, *especially in the case of little children*. Why should the sponsors be brought into danger? For they may fail by death to fulfil their promises, or through the perverseness of the child.—*De Baptismo*, c. xviii.

“In spite of the efforts of such men as Cyprian and Origen—efforts which were calculated to terrify parents into having their infants baptized—many refused to comply.

Dean STANLEY:—Even among Christian households, the instances of Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Ephrem of Edessa, Augustine, Ambrose—are decisive proofs that infant-baptism was not only *not obligatory*, but *not usual*. They had Christian parents, and yet they were not baptized till they reached maturity.—*Contemporary Review*, 1879, p. 699.

Professor H. A. W. MEYER:—The baptism of children is not to be considered as an apostolic institution; but arose gradually in the post-apostolic age, after early and long-continued resistance,

in connection with certain views of doctrine; and did not become general in the Church till after the time of Augustine. The defence of infant-baptism transcends the domain of exegesis.—*Comment on Acts xvi. 15.*

Priests versus “Indeed, so strong was the opposition to

People. infant-baptism, that at so late a date as the fourth century, some of the Fathers complained bitterly that parents could not be prevailed upon to present their infants for baptism. And even Boniface I., who became Pope of Rome in the fifth century, looked distrustfully upon the practice, and wrote to Augustine, saying: ‘Not only was the child unable to believe, but no one could tell whether, in after years, he would believe or not.’

Worthless “I might proceed to quote Celestius,

evidence for the falsely-called Apostolical Constitutions,

Infant- Ambrose, Pelagius, Augustine, Chrysostom,

Baptism. and Jerome; but surely it is not needed.

Their evidence is several centuries too late. They all, it is true, testify to the existence of infant-baptism in their day, that is, in the fourth century; and some of them, at least, appear to have believed that it had descended from the apostles. But when we go back to the inspired writings of the apostles themselves, and to the Fathers of the first and second centuries, we find not even the slightest mention of the practice. In fact, as to the apostles, and the Fathers of the first century, their language is utterly incompatible with the idea that infant-baptism was practised in their day. What, then, is the logical conclusion? To my mind, it is—as Dr. Jacob, the eminent Episcopalian, affirms—that infant-baptism is ‘*not an apostolic ordinance,*’ but only ‘*an ecclesiastical institution.*’”

Mr. Thorpe When I had proceeded thus far, Mr.

at last Thorpe said: “Well, my friend, I am bound

Convinced. to acknowledge that the case you have presented is a strong one—so strong, indeed, that I do not see how it can be successfully controverted. The testimonies of men like Dean Stanley, Dr. Jacob, and those eminent German Professors have impressed me deeply. They were all Infant-Baptists, I understand; and therefore, they had everything to gain by endeavouring to prove that infant-

baptism was practised by the apostles. But the utter silence of the New Testament and of the early Fathers, in relation to infant-baptism; its evident origin in gross superstition; the discussions which began to prevail in the third century in reference to it; the opposition which for many years it encountered—these and your other arguments seem to me to justify Dr. Jacob's statement that infant-baptism is only an 'ecclesiastical institution,' not 'an apostolic ordinance.' Under these circumstances, I feel constrained to acknowledge that I am a convert to your new views, so far as infant-baptism is concerned."

"I am glad to hear it," I responded; "and I hope you will soon feel constrained to say with the Ethiopian of old:—'Lo, here is water! What doth hinder me to be baptized?' Meanwhile, I would ask you to note the following additional testimonies of Infant-Baptists:—

Professor KAISER:—Infant-baptism was not an original institution of Christianity. . . . The first traces of infant-baptism are in the second century.—*Theology*, vol. ii. p. 178.

Professor WINER:—Originally, only adults were baptized; but at the end of the second century, in Africa, and in the third century generally, infant-baptism was introduced; and in the fourth century it was theologically maintained by Augustine.—*Manuscript Lectures*.

Professor HAHN:—According to its true, original design baptism can be given only to adults who are capable of true knowledge, repentance and faith. Neither in the Scriptures, nor during the first hundred and fifty years is a sure example of infant-baptism to be found; and we must concede that the numerous opposers of it cannot be contradicted on gospel ground.—*Theology*, p. 556.

Professor HATCH:—In its earliest times, baptism followed at once upon conversion. The ritual was of the simplest kind. nor does it appear that it needed any special minister. A later, though still very early stage, with significant modifications, is seen in the Didaché, c. 7. (1) 'He that baptizeth,' seeming to exclude a limitation of it to an officer. (2) The only element that is specified is water. (3) Previous instruction is implied, but there is no period of catechumenate defined. (4) A fast is enjoined before baptism.—*Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 294, 5.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM AND ITS SIGNIFICATION.

The Force of Truth. AT one of the numerous meetings of my Teachers' Bible Class, the superintendent said:—"We are all much indebted to you, sir, for the information you have given us, from time to time, upon the subject of baptism; and we are carefully studying the New Testament and Church-history on the whole subject. I think I may now say that we are all convinced that infant-baptism is neither scriptural nor apostolic; that, in all probability, it was borrowed and adopted from Paganism; and that it is a human invention which took its rise in superstition. But we should be glad if you would now give us an exposition of really scriptural baptism, and explain to us its signification."

"This I shall be pleased to do," I replied; "for although many volumes have been written upon this part of the question, it is really all in a nut-shell.

Baptism is Immersion. 1. "The Scriptures teach that the act of baptism is *immersion*. Of this there should be no doubt whatever. It is, as Dean Stanley says, the very meaning of the word βαπτίζω, from which our English word 'baptize' is derived.

"Moreover, not only the original word for baptism, but also the prepositions used in connection therewith; the localities in which the baptisms took place; the large baptisteries with which many of the ancient churches were provided; and the undeniable testimony of history—all prove conclusively to my mind that the apostolic baptisms and those of the early Church, for centuries, were by immersion.

Honest Testimony. "But, I am not going to weary you with a linguistic or historical discussion. Neither am I about to quote to you the testimony of Baptist Divines, however learned and distinguished they may be. I will simply give you the testimonies of a number of eminent

Infant-Baptists, who, although they practised and excused infant-sprinkling, were yet compelled, as honest men, by their knowledge of the Greek language and of the facts of history to make the admissions which I shall now quote:—

CHURCH OF ENGLAND—

Dr. E. W. BULLINGER:—By 'baptism' . . . we must understand an immersion.—*Greek Lexicon and Concordance*.

Bishop HAROLD BROWNE:—The language of the New Testament and of the primitive Fathers sufficiently points to immersion as the common mode of baptism.—*Smith's Dictionary*, Article *Baptism*,

Rev. G. A. JACOB, D.D.—Baptism in the primitive church was evidently administered by immersion of the body in the water—a mode which added to the significance of the rite, and gave a peculiar force to some of the allusions to it.—*The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament*, p. 258.

Canon BENHAM, B.D.—Immersion was, there is no doubt, the first rule of the Church. All early descriptions of baptisms, as Tertullian *De Baptismo*, use such words as 'going down,' and 'plunging in the water.' . . . In the East, immersion has remained the practice, as well as the primary rule.—*Cassell's Dictionary of Religion*, Article *Baptism*.

Dean HOOK.—At first, baptism was administered publicly, as occasion served, by rivers; afterwards the baptistery was built, at the entrance of the church, or very near it, which had a large basin in it, that held the persons to be baptized, and they went down by steps into it. Afterwards, when immersion came to be disused, fonts were set up at the entrance of churches.—*Church Dictionary*, Article *Baptism*.

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER:—If they shall certify the priest that the child may well endure it, he shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily. . . . The directions of the Prayer Book as to adults are as follows:—Then shall the priest take each person to be baptized by the right hand . . . and shall dip him in the water, or pour water upon him.—*The Baptismal Services*.

Dr. WHITBY:—Immersion was religiously observed by all the Christians for thirteen centuries, and was approved by the Church of England. And since the change of it into sprinkling was made without any allowance from the Author of the institution, or any license from any Council of the Church—being that which the Romanist still urgeth to justify his refusal of the cup to the laity—it were to be wished that this custom might be again of general use.—*Ceremonies on Romans vi. 4*.

Dr. WALL—who received the thanks of both Houses of Convocation for his book on Baptism:—Immersion is so plain and clear by an infinite number of passages, that one cannot but pity the weak endeavour of such as would maintain the negative of it. It was in all probability the way by which our blessed Saviour, and for certain was the most usual and ordinary way by which the ancient Christians, did receive their baptism. 'Tis a great want of prudence, as well as honesty, to refuse to grant to an adversary what is certainly true, and may be proved so.—*History of Infant-Baptism, part ii. c. 9.*

Dean STANLEY:—There can be no question that the original form of baptism—the very meaning of the word—was complete immersion in the deep baptismal waters; and that, for at least four centuries, any other form was either unknown, or regarded, unless in the case of dangerous illness, as an exceptional, almost monstrous case. *To this form* the Eastern Church still rigidly adheres; and the most illustrious and venerable portion of it, that of the Byzantine Empire, absolutely repudiates and ignores any other mode of administration as essentially invalid. . . . A few drops of water are now the Western substitute for the three-fold plunge into the rushing rivers or the wide baptisteries of the East.—*History of the Eastern Church, p. 28.*

PRESBYTERIAN AND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES—

Dr. CHALMERS:—The original meaning of the word 'baptism' is immersion.—*Lecture on Romans vi. 4.*

Dr. MACKNIGHT:—Jesus submitted to be baptized—that is, to be put under the water, and to be raised out again by John.—*Comment on Romans vi. 4.*

Professor GODET:—*To be baptized in the name of*, signifies to be plunged in water, while engaging to belong to Him in whose name the external rite is performed.—*Comment on 1 Cor. i. 13.*

Dr. DODDRIDGE.—Inquiring whether immersion is an essential circumstance in baptism, Dr. Doddridge says:—The most considerable argument in favour of immersion is that it was practised in the primitive ages. Several texts in the New Testament plainly declare this: Matt. iii. 6, 16; John iii. 23; Acts viii. 36—39; and it appears by the Fathers that this was at least generally retained till clinic baptism, *i.e.*, a baptism of the sick in their beds, took place.—*Lectures on Pneumatology and Ethics—Lecture 202.*

THE GREAT REFORMERS—

JOHN CALVIN:—It is evident that the term *baptize* means to immerse, and that this was the form used in the primitive church.—*Institutes, book iv., c. 15, 19.*

MARTIN LUTHER:—I could wish that such as are to be baptized should be completely immersed into water, according to the meaning of the word, and the significance of the ordinance; not because I think it necessary, but because it would be beautiful to have a full and perfect sign of so perfect a thing; as also, without doubt, it was instituted by Christ.—*Works, edition 1551, vol. ii. p. 76.*

The Signification of Baptism. 2. The Scriptures teach that baptism symbolises *the washing away of sins, and the believer's union with Christ, in death, burial, and resurrection.* See the words of the apostle Peter, recorded in Acts ii. 38; and particularly the words of the apostle Paul:—‘We were *buried*, therefore, with Him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.’—Rom. vi. 4. On this passage, or the corresponding one in Col. ii. 12, the following testimonies are worthy of attention:—

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Professors SANDAY and HEADLAM :—Baptism has a double function. (1). It brings the Christian into personal contact with Christ, so close that it may be fitly described as union with Him. (2). It expresses symbolically a series of acts corresponding to the redeeming acts of Christ. Immersion symbolises Death; Submersion symbolises Burial—the ratification of death; Emergence symbolises Resurrection. All these the Christian has to undergo in a moral and spiritual sense, and by means of his union with Christ.—*International and Critical Commentary*, *Romans vi.*

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Sprinkling or pouring, taking the place of immersion?"
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The following passages of Scripture were grossly misunderstood—John iii. 3; 1 Peter iii. 14; Acts xxii. 16: and other passages which set forth salvation by faith alone, were ignored. Of course, when once it was believed that baptism was the literal means of regeneration, and that without baptism there could be no salvation; then, both infant-baptism and sprinkling, or pouring, were sure to be introduced, sooner or later. It was only a question of time; for in cases of sickness it would be impossible for people to be carried from their beds and then immersed in water. Hence, the origin of clinic-baptism, that is baptism of sick persons in their beds.”

Clinic-Baptisms. “The first sign of innovation is found in the Didaché:—

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"I quite agree with you," I replied. "But the English mind moves slowly; and the logical connection between an intellectual assent to the Baptist position and the duty of a conscientious obedience to conviction is not always perceived even by good men."

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In Superstition. "It had the same root-cause as infant-baptism," I answered. "It arose on account of the supposed mystical or magical power of baptism, which the priests contended was practically necessary to salvation.

The following passages of Scripture were grossly misunderstood—John iii. 3; 1 Peter iii. 14; Acts xxii. 16: and other passages which set forth salvation by faith alone, were ignored. Of course, when once it was believed that baptism was the literal means of regeneration, and that without baptism there could be no salvation; then, both infant-baptism and sprinkling, or pouring, were sure to be introduced, sooner or later. It was only a question of time; for in cases of sickness it would be impossible for people to be carried from their beds and then immersed in water. Hence, the origin of clinic-baptism, that is baptism of sick persons in their beds.”

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Cheering "On the question of immersion," said the
Success. superintendent, "as well as on that of the
signification of baptism, our views concur with yours. We
thank you for the explanations you have given us as to the
origin of sprinkling or pouring; and we are so entirely
convinced as to the soundness of your arguments, that
several of us have made up our minds to follow your
example and be baptized in full and loyal obedience to the
command of our blessed Lord."

CHAPTER XXXII.

I OBEY MY LORD, AND AM BAPTIZED.

I now resume my personal narrative, which was suspended at the close of the fourth chapter of this treatise.

I must Having come to the definite conclusions
Follow delineated in the preceding chapters, it be-
Christ. came evident to me that my so-called baptism, administered when I was an unconscious infant, was no baptism at all; and that I was bound as a disciple of Christ, to obey His command, and be really baptized.

Antiquated 1. Honoured ministerial brethren argued
Arguments. with me, and did their best to dissuade me from changing my life-long views; but their scriptural, historical, and philological arguments were antiquated, self-contradictory, and in entire opposition to the remarkable concessions made by great numbers of the most eminent Infant-Baptists, who, although defending infant-baptism, have made admissions which concede much—in some instances, very much—and in the case of Dean Stanley, indeed, nearly everything for which Baptists have contended so long, and suffered so much.

A frequent 2. Some of my Christian friends en-
Objection. deavoured to persuade me that I was under no obligation to be baptized, inasmuch as I had long since received the Holy Spirit, and had for many years confessed and preached Jesus Christ. My answer to them was very simple, namely: that as our Lord and Master had been baptized with the baptism of John; and as He Himself had instituted Christian-baptism, and had commanded that His disciples of all nations should be baptized; and as the apostles either personally, or by means of their assistants, had baptized their converts;—therefore, baptism must be an obligatory and a very sacred ordinance. And as I had been for so many years practising a ceremony which I had at length come to renounce as unscriptural and superstitious,

and had been calling it Baptism all the while; it was incumbent upon me that I should publicly acknowledge my error, and obey my Lord's command by being personally baptized. To have done otherwise would, in my case, have been to ignore His own words. "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments."—John xiv. 15.

The Spirit's Baptism a Qualification for Believers'-Baptism. 3. I saw also that instead of the baptism of the Holy Spirit being a substitute for the rite of baptism, the apostle Peter clearly teaches that the Spirit's baptism is a reason and a qualification for submission to that solemn rite: "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."—Acts x. 47, 48.

On this point, the words of Dr Alexander and John Wesley—each of them an advocate of infant-baptism—are worthy of attention:—

Dr. J. A. ALEXANDER:—The sign of baptism might have seemed to be superfluous, after the gift of the thing signified; but baptism is a sealing and initiatory, no less than a typical, ordinance, and is rendered necessary, not by utilitarian reasons, but by *express Divine command*.

JOHN WESLEY:—Peter does not say: 'They have the baptism of the Spirit, therefore they do not need baptism with water.' But just the contrary. 'If they have received the Spirit, then baptize them with water.' How easily is the question decided, if we will take the Word of God for our rule.

Holiness means Obedience. 4. Another argument was often brought forward by my friends, namely; that the whole subject was one of no moment; and that, instead of devoting so much attention to its consideration, my time would be much better spent in studying and teaching holiness of heart and life. I soon saw; however, that this argument would prove too much. It would condemn even Christ and His apostles. For was not He baptized? And did not He institute and command Christian-baptism? And did not the apostles practise it? I saw, also, that my friends had a wrong idea of holiness.

The scriptural idea of holiness is—entire surrender to God, the reception of the fulness of the Holy Spirit, likeness to Christ, and implicit and full obedience to all His commands. Of course, it is possible for a person to attach undue importance even to believers'-baptism, as alas! Roman Catholics and Ritualists do to infant-baptism. But to go to the other extreme, and say that believers'-baptism is of no importance at all, is to decry the wisdom and authority of Christ and His apostles, and to set up our own opinion against His command and their example.

Baptism 5. Baptism, therefore, instead of being of
a Test of no importance to the holy life, is an integral
Obedience. part of that life; and everyone who would follow His Lord fully, should be really baptized; not unconsciously, as in infancy, but by his own act and choice, and with true faith and love to Christ, without which, baptism—or even giving the body to be burned—profiteth nothing.

Obeying 6. Other of my friends told me that if I
Christ, not were to be immersed, I should—by attaching
Ritualism. so much importance to an external rite—be no better than a Ritualist. "What!" I replied, "Is it Ritualism to follow the example of the Lord Jesus, who, at the age of thirty, was baptized *into* the Jordan?—Mark i. 9, margin. Is it Ritualism to fulfil the words of the apostle Paul: '*Buried with Him through baptism?*'"—Rom. vi. 4. Verily, if infant-baptism requires to be supported by such a charge as this, it is self-condemned. It would be just as reasonable to impute Ritualism to all who observe the Lord's Supper, and who thus commemorate the death of our blessed Lord. Believers'-baptism is as much an ordinance of our Lord as the sacred Supper itself; and its observance is as obligatory upon every one of His disciples who is able to be baptized. It is not necessary to salvation; but it is necessary to entire obedience.

Appeals to 7. Others expostulated with me as
Self- follows:—"What does it matter, even if it
Interest. be true that all the apostolic baptisms were by immersion, and if the apostles baptized believers only?

You were sprinkled when you were an infant ; God accepts that as a sufficient substitute for baptism ; and what better would you be if you were now immersed ? Besides, if you publicly acknowledge your change of belief, and are immersed, you will, by so doing, discredit all your past ministry. You will shake people's faith in your stability ; you will weaken your influence, and you will most certainly forfeit your pastorate. And what will you do then ? Will your baptism feed and clothe you, and find you a new home and a suitable congregation ? You may have to take a church in some unhealthy town, where you may not live for twelve months ; whereas, if you are sensible, and act prudently, you may remain in your present delightful sphere, and continue to preach there for the next twenty years."

Counting the Cost. 8. Until I heard these expostulations, I never realized how difficult it is for a minister of the gospel to emancipate himself from the bondage of error, and the slavery of custom. Fear of man, dread of the future, love of position, and that natural unwillingness to be sneered at as unstable, Utopian, and Quixotic—all these temptations of the devil assail with terrible force the minister of the gospel who dares to contemplate a departure from the track of thought which the feet of his ancestors have conscientiously trodden for centuries.

Submission not Selection. With the Bible in my hands, however, I could not any longer claim that being sprinkled when an infant was scriptural baptism ; or that God would or could accept as a sufficient substitute for baptism that which is in itself a superstitious ceremony, and which is also in every sense a perversion and subversion of our Lord's command. Therefore, I felt that I must obey my Lord and King by being baptized in accordance with the terms of the Divine ordinance.

All must be placed on the Altar. 9. I saw also, that it would be unworthy of me as a Christian minister, to refuse to obey Christ on account of the painful consequences which appeared likely to result from my obedience. I feel it right however, to acknowledge that

as I contemplated those consequences, I often shrank from them. But I saw that it was my duty to submit to the Lord's authority, and that I could not expect His blessing, unless I followed the light which He had graciously given me. And I had the assurance that, as the grace of God supported Abraham and Isaac, when they ascended Mount Moriah to make their sacrifice of submission, so that same grace could sustain me. And I remembered, with comfort, the words of Christ:—"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."—Matt. x. 39.

Accordingly, having become fully convinced as to my duty, I asked—"What doth hinder me to be baptized?" And with deep sorrow for having been so long in error; with fear and trembling as to my future, which was absolutely dark; and yet, with a sacred peace and joy in Christ, and a sweet confidence that He would not forsake me, but would guide my footsteps in His paths; I applied for baptism, and in due time, had the privilege of obeying my Redeemer's farewell command.

My 10. The time of my baptism was one of
Baptism. great spiritual blessing. Christ came very near to me by His Divine Spirit; and I realized, as never before, my union with my Saviour in his death, burial, and resurrection. I was conscious also of a definiteness, thoroughness, and completeness in my confession of Him as my Lord and King, such as I had never before experienced. Not that I felt there was any merit in being baptized; or that the sacred rite had any saving effect. I saw that it was Christ's will and command that I should be baptized; and I felt it to be a duty, a privilege, and a joy to obey Him. As I came out of the baptismal waters, the following lines came into my mind, as a Divine message of comfort and stimulus:—

He leadeth me! O blessed thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

This verse cheered me greatly, at the time of my baptism;

and it seems to have been given by the Holy Spirit, as a foretaste of blessings that have attended me during the succeeding years. Trials have been many and great. The financial loss has been considerable. For a time, many friends forsook me, or avoided my company. Doors to Christian service were closed to me; and I was left almost alone with God. But He soon gave me proofs of the promise:—‘Them that honour Me, I will honour.’—1 Samuel, ii 30.

The path of obedience is ever the path of safety and of peace; although the feet that tread it may sometimes bleed by reason of the roughness of the way.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WHAT MY BAPTISM LED TO.

I Relinquish my Pastorate. As I could no longer conform to the 14th Article of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, which required me to "hold and maintain the lawfulness of infant-baptism"; and as the Court of Chancery refused to modify this Article; there was only one honourable course open to me, namely—to finally terminate my eight years' pastorate. This I accordingly did, without a day's delay.

I Take up my Cross. It was hard to surrender a fine church, an income of about £300 per annum, a beautiful manse, and a ministerial position of which any man might be proud. But the Lord wonderfully sustained me by His grace.

Faithful Adherents. To my surprise, nine of my office-bearers, and about one hundred of my congregation, made a determined effort to retain me in the town. Agreement with my new views in some cases, and affection in all, prompted them to this act of devotion.

My New Cause. After much prayer, I reluctantly consented to remain. A small building was rented; and we commenced, as a new congregation, to worship God untrammelled by the doctrinal inventions of men, and free to observe believers'-baptism in its apostolic simplicity and beauty.

The Smile of God. God smiled upon our efforts. Within three years of the relinquishing of my pastorate, we were enabled to erect, in the finest position of the town, a new Church, with Lecture Hall, Manse, Class Rooms, and every modern requisite for carrying on the work of God. The total cost of these buildings, with church-furniture and organ, is about £8,000. Towards this sum, I have, up to the present time, been enabled to collect about £4,000.

No As I look back, I feel constrained to say,
Regrets. that I have never for a moment regretted obeying the dictates of my conscience, and following the Lord in being baptized; although much trial and toil have resulted therefrom. The more I read on the subject of baptism, the more firmly am I convinced that the course I adopted was scriptural in principle and action, and was well-pleasing to the Lord.

A new My new Church, Lecture Hall, and Manse,
Church. are all put in trust with the Baptist Union of England and Wales. It is my earnest desire that, before the Lord calls me home to Himself, I may have the pleasure of knowing that the debt of £4,000 has been entirely liquidated.

A Substitute In conclusion, I would say that, in
for Infant- response to many requests from ministers
Baptism. and others, I have prepared a Form of Service for the Dedication of Infants. I am thankful for the brotherly words of commendation of this Service, written by my friend, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A., and which will be found on page 41 of this treatise. It is encouraging to me to know that this Form of Service is meeting with wide acceptance. Even where it cannot be used in its entirety, it may, possibly, afford some suggestions as to the method and spirit in which a dedication service for infants may be profitably conducted. Humbly commending it to the consideration of my ministerial brethren, I venture to append it to this volume.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AN APPEAL TO PROTESTANT CHRISTIANS.

Infant-Baptism 1. If the reasoning of the previous chapters
a Human is sound, the reader will, I think, perceive
Invention. that there is no passage of Scripture which
commands, or which furnishes an instance of infant-baptism;
that, as Dr. Jacob avers, "it is not an apostolic ordinance,"
but only "an ecclesiastical institution"; that it arose in
circumstances of gross ignorance and superstition, probably
in the beginning of the third century; that it slowly spread,
in spite of the continuous and persistent opposition of many
who desired to adhere to primitive Christianity in its sim-
plicity and purity; and that, although it was forced upon
these early Protestants by cruel persecutions, yet it was not
until as late as the fifth century that it became practically
universal.

Unauthorised 2. But it took many centuries to establish
Changes. infant sprinkling instead of believers'-immer-
sion. As Dean Stanley says:—

Dean STANLEY:—For the first *thirteen centuries*, the almost
universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the
New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word
'baptize'—that those who were baptized, were plunged, sub-
merged, immersed into the water.—*Contemporary Review*, 1879,
p. 697.

The position may, I think, be fairly stated as follows:—
Priests, in the early centuries, took our Lord's ordinance
of baptism, and changed both its subjects and its mode.
Instead of administering it to professing believers only, and
that by immersion, they began to administer it to un-
conscious babes, and that by sprinkling. Where was their
authority for these innovations upon the custom of the
inspired apostles? They had no authority whatever.

Is Christ 3. The question at issue is not merely one
to be concerning the quantity of water; but it is—
Supreme? whether the Bible is our sole, sufficient, and
authoritative guide; and whether Christ is to be supreme

in His Church. It appears to me to be the old battle Protestantism *versus* Ecclesiasticism.

The Evangelical Clergy. 4. I would venture to appeal to the Evangelical clergy of the Church of England whether the time has not come for them to re-consider their position in view of the sad effects of infant-baptism in their communion. Is it not evident that that Church is rapidly being Romanised; and that the teaching of the Prayer Book respecting infant-baptism being constantly appealed to by the Ritualists in favour of baptismal regeneration, which lies at the very foundation of their sacerdotal system and that of Romanism? Nor can their contention, in my judgment, be fairly disputed. The Catechism and the Baptismal Services are, on this point entirely in their favour, although the great bulk of the Prayer Book is Evangelical. Would to God that the Evangelical clergy might hear and heed the voice which is slowly gathering volume amongst their flocks, demanding a Second Reformation, ere it be too late! For, as Bar Bunsen has well said:—"The Reformation accepted infant baptism, although its leaders were more or less aware that it was neither scriptural nor apostolic."

The Free Church Ministers. 5. The Sacerdotalism of the age appears with still greater force to the ministers of the Free Churches, whose very existence is proof of their robust, vigorous, and noble Protestantism. Many Free Church ministers pay little regard to infant baptism; others view it simply as a dedication; while others, indeed, are often troubled in their minds when required to administer it, as they have begun to doubt its scripturalness. But is this sufficient? To me, it was not. Where is the good of supposing, inferring, conjecturing, and guessing that infant-baptism *may* have been practised by the apostles, when there is not a scrap of historical evidence to prove that it had even begun to exist as late as the beginning of the third century?

What is needed. 6. If a thousand ministers of the various Protestant denominations were to announce to their congregations, on the same day, that they then

selves intended to be scripturally baptized, and that they would sprinkle no more unconscious babes, but would gladly dedicate them to the Lord; I have no doubt that their congregations would soon begin to wonder how they could have believed so long in infant-baptism, and have consented to its being practised. Is it too much to hope that, ere long, Ritualism and Romanism shall receive their answer, in some such united testimony against one of the chief sources of sacerdotal tyranny?

The Difficulty of Ministerial Action. 7. But it is to Christians generally that I appeal, and not only to ministers of the gospel. It is very difficult for ministers, singly, to take a definite stand upon this matter, especially if unsupported by their congregations. In the present state of opinion and prejudice, such ministers would, probably, lose their churches; and even if they did not, the desertion of friends, the withdrawals from their congregations, the financial loss, the imputation of motives, the clamour, slander, insults, and ostracism, which would almost certainly have to be borne by them—these are difficult to contemplate, and even harder to suffer. Still the Truth *will* gain, and *does* gain, ministerial adherents, who, in the act of suffering, receive their reward.

The People. 8. But the generality of Christians would not have these things to experience; although to renounce the opinions and prejudices of a life-time, and to be baptized may be a heavy cross; but if that cross be taken up and borne for Christ's sake, His grace which is "sufficient," will be found to suffice and abound. To such Christians, I would say—

Have you been Baptized at all? 9. Have you ever been "*buried with Christ?*" Perhaps you were sprinkled when an infant. But baptism, in the apostolic age, as Dean Stanley shews, was an immersion. It was a being "*buried with Christ.*"—Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12. Moreover, when you were sprinkled as an infant, you were not a consenting party; whereas all the baptisms mentioned in the New Testament, were evidently baptisms of professing disciples. And remember, there is only "*one baptism.*"—Eph. iv. 5.

And, surely, that is the baptism which was practised by the apostles. But infant-baptism is only "an ecclesiastical institution," and not "an apostolic ordinance." Therefore infant-baptism cannot be the baptism which was practised by the apostles. It is not, therefore, a question of your being *re-baptized*, or being baptized again. The question is—Have you ever received apostolic, Christian-baptism at all? Have you ever been "buried with Christ?"

Full 10. *Why not surrender, and be baptized?*

Surrender. Perhaps some one has told you that you enlisted under Christ's banner in infancy, when your sponsors took certain vows for you: and perhaps, you have long since been confirmed, and taken those vows upon yourself. But, my reader, the New Testament is as silent about sponsors and confirmation as it is about infant-baptism. Besides, no one can be enlisted in an army as an infant. He must enlist of his own free will. And when he has enlisted, he has to wear the king's uniform, and to conform to the laws and regulations laid down for his guidance. So when any one, by faith, enlists in the army of Christ, he has to obey the commands of his Divine King. And one of the very first of these is—to confess Him in baptism.—Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38. But are not infant-baptism, sponsors and confirmation simply an ecclesiastical substitute for our Lord's ordinance of believers'-baptism? And no ecclesiastics have a tittle of authority to change the command and ordinance of our Lord and King, and to set up their own inventions instead.

Implicit If, therefore, my reader, it is your desire

Obedience. to obey all Christ's commands, and to follow Him fully, permit me to urge you not to confer with flesh and blood; not to defer to the entreaties of friends, nor to the counsels of uninspired teachers, however devoted and eminent; not to consult your self-interest, however much it may appear to be threatened. Fix your eye steadily upon the inspired Word of God. Ponder its teachings. Pray for the light of the Holy Spirit. Look up into the face of Jesus who has given His life for you, and say to Him—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And as His will shall unfold itself to you—that His

disciples should follow Him into the waters of baptism, and thus confess Him in the sacred symbol of death, burial, and resurrection—gladly yield yourself to what you believe to be His will, however humbling it may be to your pride, and however heavy His yoke of obedience may appear. You will then experience that His yoke is easy, and His burden light, and that in the keeping of His commandments there is great reward.

Entire Surrender to Christ. 11. Although you may already have confessed Christ with much sincerity in some other way; yet if you have never been *baptized as a believer*, you have not hitherto made your confession of Him in accordance with His farewell command. Then delay not. Shrink not from the duty. Heed not the opposition, the contempt, or the mockery which your obedience may entail. Jesus was *crucified* for you. Is it not an honour to suffer shame or loss for Him? Think not of yourself, but of Him—His claims—His will—His command. And as your feet go down into those waters which tell of cleansing, death, burial, and resurrection, His presence will enable you, with perfect peace and heavenly joy, to say:—

Jesus! I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken—
Thou, from hence, my ALL shalt be.

The Spirit of Love. 12. And having been baptized, be careful to maintain, at all times, a meek and quiet spirit; not only free from censoriousness, but manifesting that Christian “love, which is the bond of perfectness.”—Col. iii. 14. If misunderstood and misrepresented; if motives and aims from which you recoil are imputed to you; if opposed by those whom you might have expected to rejoice in your scriptural convictions and your Christly obedience; seek, by earnest prayer, that grace and strength and gentleness which dwelt so abundantly in your Saviour, and which He will, by the Holy Spirit, bountifully bestow upon all who humbly, trustfully, and faithfully obey Him

FORM OF SERVICE FOR THE
DEDICATION
OF INFANTS TO THE LORD.

- ¶ *Christian Parents desiring to acknowledge the Lord in their ways, and publicly to dedicate their Children to God, the presence of their fellow-believers, are invited to bring them for this purpose, at the earliest suitable opportunity.*
- ¶ *At the time appointed, the people standing, the Minister shall say:—*

Hear the words of Holy Scripture, as recorded by Saint Matthew and Saint Mark:—

THEN were there brought unto Jesus little children, that He should put His hands on them, and pray; and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased; and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them.*

¶ *Then shall the Minister make this Exhortation:—*

BELOVED, ye have heard the words of our Saviour Christ; how He commanded the children to be brought unto Him; blamed those who would have kept them from Him; and said:—"Of such is the kingdom of God." Ye perceive also, that by His outward gesture and deed, He declared His tender love for them. He embraced them in His arms, laid His hands upon them, and blessed them. Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe, that

* Matt. xix. 13. Mark x, 13-16.

He who now sitteth at the right hand of the Majesty on high, is the same tender Saviour, who in the days of His sojourning upon earth, so graciously regarded little children. Wherefore, being thus persuaded of the good-will of our Saviour toward *this child*, I call upon you who are here present to unite with me in prayer in *his* behalf.

¶ *Then, all kneeling, the Minister shall say :—*

ALMIGHTY and Eternal Lord, the Aid of all who need, the Helper of all who flee to Thee for succour, the Life of those who believe, and the Resurrection of the dead ; we call upon Thee for *this child*, now to be solemnly dedicated unto Thee ; and we humbly pray that as *he* has been born into this world a child after the flesh, *he* may, by grace, be born into Thy Kingdom a *child* after the Spirit, and so inherit eternal life ; that all sinful affections may die in *him*, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in *him* ; that *he* may have power over the world, the flesh, and the devil ; and that, finally, *he* may, by Thy mercy, come to the land of everlasting bliss ; to the honour and glory of Thy Holy Name. *Amen.*

¶ *Then, all standing, the Minister shall address the persons presenting, as follows :—*

DEARLY beloved, ye have brought *this child* here, to dedicate *him* unto God. I ask, therefore :—

DO you, in presenting *this child*, desire and intend, by God's help, to train *him* in the knowledge of God, to Whom *he* is now to be dedicated ; instructing *him* in the Holy Scriptures, as the only Rule of Faith and Practice ; and encouraging *him* to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit that *he* may be led to "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," through Whom alone *he* can inherit eternal life ?

Answer. We do.

¶ *Then the Minister shall take the child into his arms, and shall say :—*

Name this Child.

¶ *And then, naming it accordingly, he shall say:—*

N. Unto God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, we do now solemnly and humbly dedicate thee; praying that in spirit, soul, and body thou mayest become wholly the Lord's, and evermore live unto Him and serve Him. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace! *Amen.*

¶ *Then the Minister, having given back the child, shall say:—*

WE have now dedicated *this child* to the Lord, and have asked for His blessing, Who alone can make the teaching of His Holy Word effectual unto us. Let us continue to ask in faith, that to *him* may be given the Spirit of wisdom and of the fear of the Lord, that *he* may give heed to the counsels and exhortations of God, and accept the invitation of our Lord Jesus Christ, to come unto Him that *he* may have eternal life.

Let us pray.

¶ *Then, all kneeling, the whole Congregation shall say after the Minister:—*

OUR Father, Which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, For ever and ever. *Amen.*

¶ *General Thanksgiving, to be said by the whole Congregation after the Minister.*

ALMIGHTY GOD, our Heavenly Father, we give Thee humble and hearty thanks for Thy goodness and loving kindness, in thus permitting these Thy servants to dedicate to Thee *the child* whom Thou hast given to them; and earnestly do we pray that, through Thy grace and mercy, and the power of the Holy Ghost, spiritual life may be imparted unto *him*; and that *he* may grow up into the

Lord Jesus Christ in all things, and be fully conformed to His image and likeness. We also pray that Thy heavenly grace and benediction may rest upon the parents; that they, through Thy help, may be enabled to maintain a consistent and godly life, and thus, by example as well as by precept, lead their *child* to a full and saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus, to the praise and glory of His name, to Whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

¶ *Then, all standing, the Minister shall make this closing Exhortation to the persons presenting:—*

YE are to take care that *this child* be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and that, as soon as *he* shall give evidence of *his* personal faith in Jesus Christ, *he* be instructed that it is *his* duty publicly to confess Him as *his* Saviour and Lord, in the Ordinance of Baptism, in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, and the practice of the Apostles as recorded therein.*

THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

* THE TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Texts referring to the duty of Confessing Christ:—

Matthew x. 32, 33.

Romans x. 9, 10.

Texts referring to Believers'-Baptism.

Matthew xxviii. 18—20.

Acts ix. 17, 18.

Mark xvi. 15, 16.

" x. 47, 48.

Acts ii. 41.

" xvi. 14, 15.

" viii. 12.

" xvi. 31—33.

" viii. 13.

" xviii. 8.

" viii. 36, 38.

" xix. 5.

Texts referring to the Spiritual Signification of Baptism:—

Acts ii. 38.

Galatians iii. 27.

Romans vi. 3—6.

Colossians ii. 12.

1 *Corinthians* xii. 13.

1 *Peter* iii. 21.

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